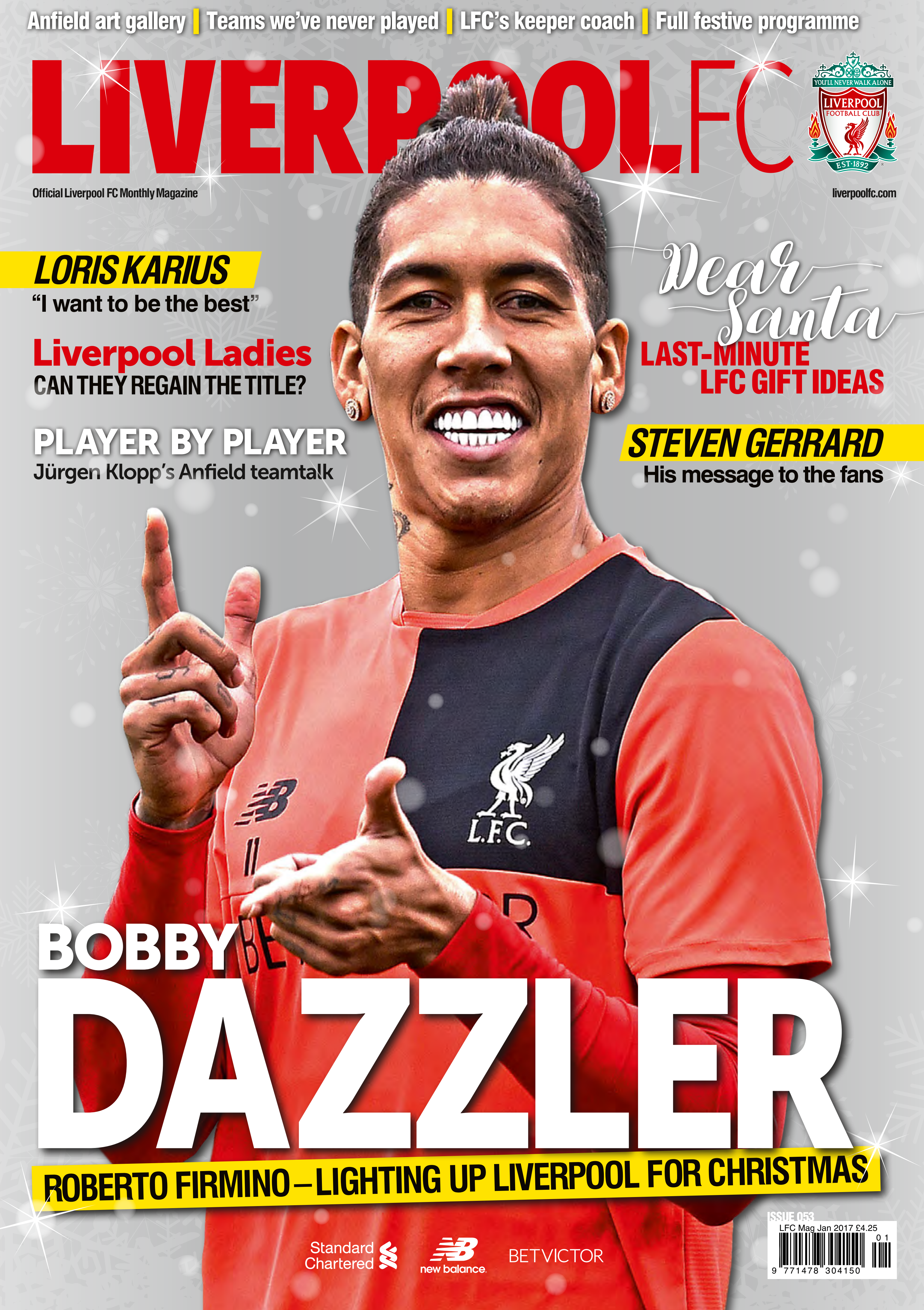

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Issue 53 January 2017

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Jürgen Klopp by Bobby aged 6

It's Santa Klopp with his reindeer and sleigh as drawn by a pupil from All Saints Primary School in Anfield; now for some special Liverpool FC presents inside…

LIVERPOOL

A lively front section exploring the wider LFC world and keeping fans up-to-date with what's happening and what's about to.

FOOTBALL

The stuff that happens on the pitch: exclusive interviews with current Reds stars, the stats that matter plus a few blasts from the past.

CLUB

How the club reaches out to communities at home and abroad, plus stadium news, fab official merchandise, and fan representatives.

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Divock finds a way

Divock Origi and team-mates celebrate his all-important opening goal against a resilient Sunderland side at Anfield last month. Boss Jürgen Klopp called it "an intense game and a deserved win at the end. We stayed concentrated, worked for the moment and found a way."





Ben makes his mark

Ben Woodburn makes history with his goal against Leeds United in the EFL Cup quarter-final at Anfield making him Liverpool's youngest goalscorer at 17 years and 45 days, beating Michael Owen's 1997 record by 98 days.


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LIVERPOOL

Reds and Real Madrid Legends coming to Anfield plus LFC on social media and how to survive the festive football period

Some of the many flags on the Kop – but can you remember what's on the feet of the Liver Bird just below left? Answer on p98

Brazil blend

Firmino and Coutinho choose the perfect setting to talk life, the universe and football on LFCTV

Liverpool restaurant Bem Brasil played host to two special guests recently. LFCTV, the club's official channel, accompanied Reds duo Philippe Coutinho and Roberto Firmino to the city-centre steakhouse where they laughed, joked and chatted revealingly about life in Liverpool, home-from-home cuisine, each other's personalities, goal celebrations and the race for the 2016/17 Premier League title.

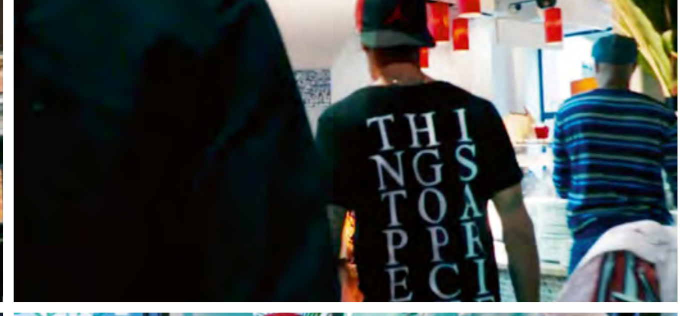
On living in the city Philippe says: "I've been welcome in Liverpool since I first arrived, by the supporters, by the people from the city whom I find similar to people back home in Brazil. They are caring and humble, so it's very similar to where I come from. At home I have my wife and my daughter who live with me, so that means everything to me. They give me strength to go out every day and do my job."

Coutinho feels that the side has "a great chance" to lift the Premier League trophy this season: "Last year we weren't so close but did well in the Europa League, but in the end we lost and it was a difficult moment. The experience has strengthened our group and I hope this year we manage to challenge for the title." Roberto adds: "It's one of the most difficult leagues, all the teams are strong. The winning team will be the team that's fought the hardest for the title. Every game is challenging and difficult, and of course I hope it will be us."

That's just a tiny taster. Watch the whole of this special feature via the club website on LFCTVGO. Visit liverpoolfc.com/watch for details.

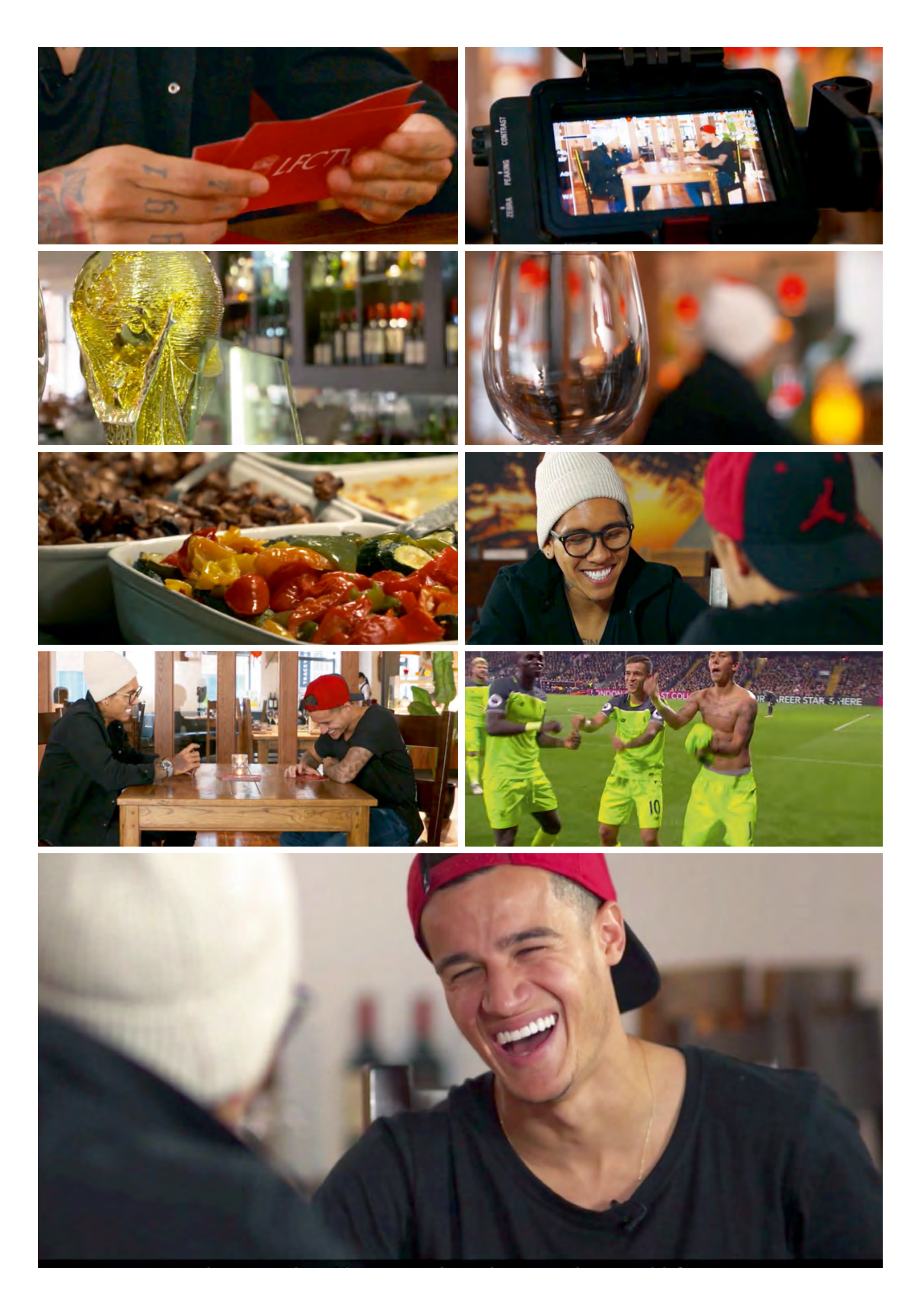











LFCTV
CONTRAST
PEAKING
ZEBRA

REDS V REAL: THE REMATCH

Legends game between Liverpool and Madrid aces at Anfield confirmed for next March

The Liverpool FC Foundation Legends Charity Match 2017 between a team of world-class ex-Reds and their Real Madrid counterparts will take place at Anfield on Saturday 25 March 2017.

It's a rematch of the game in June 2015 at the Bernabeu, won 4-2 by the hosts in front of 60,000 spectators. On that occasion Harry Kewell and Michael Owen scored for Liverpool before Real came back to win with goals by Roberto Carlos (two), Jose Amavisca and Ivan Perez.

To announce the Anfield return, Robbie Fowler and Ian Rush were joined by Roberto Carlos plus his Madrid colleagues and former Spanish internationals Emilio Butragueno and Ricardo Gallego.

Among those confirmed to play for the Reds are Luis Garcia, Gary McAllister, Jamie Carragher, Patrik Berger, Jerzy Dudek, Vladimir Smicer, Dietmar Hamann, John Aldridge, Daniel Agger and Michael Owen. Real Madrid's team will feature stars like Luis Figo and Steve McManaman. All proceeds will go to LFC Foundation, the club's official charity.

Fowler said: "We're really looking forward to playing Real Madrid next spring. We hope to put on a good show for our fans in the first Legends game held at Anfield while raising funds for the Foundation."

Tickets, priced at £20 for adults and £5 juniors, are now on sale, while hospitality starts from £50 per person. Call 0151 264 2222 for details or visit bookings.liverpoolfc.com/events.

BOOK WINNERS

Jürgen Klopp the Biography: Stuart Thornton, Northampton; Cahal Boyd, Co Derry; Tom Bell, Workington; Kevin MacDonald, Tonbridge; Christoph Stolzlechner, Pondorf, Austria; Trevor Skinner, Polegate, East Sussex; Kevin Shannon, Prescot; Casper Hagen, Nykobing Falster, Denmark; Tony Hillman, Launceston, Cornwall; Mark Guiver, Clitheroe.

Liverpool Captains: Tim Sansom, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire; Ian Orrell, Eastham, Wirral; Alan Feeney, Kirkby.



Sir Roger's new honour



He was the only player to have an honorary knighthood bestowed upon him by the fans, and now former Reds striker 'Sir' Roger Hunt has been made an Honorary Freeman of Warrington.

Roger, now 78, was one of the Bill Shankly boys and a true Kop idol. His goals helped Liverpool to escape the Second Division in the early 1960s, and until Ian Rush came along he was LFC's all-time record scorer with 286 goals – still no player has netted more for the Reds in the league (245 in 404 games). He was also an important member of England's World Cup-winning team of 1966, scoring three goals in the tournament.

After his football career had finished, he established the Roger Hunt 11 initiative, also supported the work of the Bobby Moore Fund and Alder Hey Hospital and has been a celebrity golf regular to help raise money for good causes.



He called the Freedom of Warrington honour "a wonderful day for me, my wife and family. Throughout my career I've had lots of encouragement. Having a fantastic mum and dad was the start of it. In Warrington, Freddie Worral helped by coming with me for my interview with Liverpool FC. I also owe a great deal to my team-mates at [local club] Stockton Heath, Liverpool, Bolton, England and, of course, the great Bill Shankly, Sir Alf Ramsey and my idol Nat Lofthouse.

"Through all these times I have also received magnificent support from the people of Warrington."

Roger has never forgotten his roots. When Warrington Town reached the first round proper of the FA Cup in 2014/15 for the first time in their history, beating League Two club Exeter City 1–0 live on the BBC, he supported the players and watched the subsequent draw with them. He continues to be an honorary vice-president of the club and is an active presence in the community, attending an exhibition at Lymm Hotel to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Brazilian national team staying there during the 1966 World Cup.

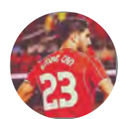
Warrington council leader Terry O'Neill calls him "a national treasure. He is a modest man and I know how genuinely pleased and proud he is to be receiving this award. It will sit alongside his World Cup medal, many achievements with Liverpool and MBE."



REDS ON INSTAGRAM

Rounding up some of the best posts from lads, ladies and fans



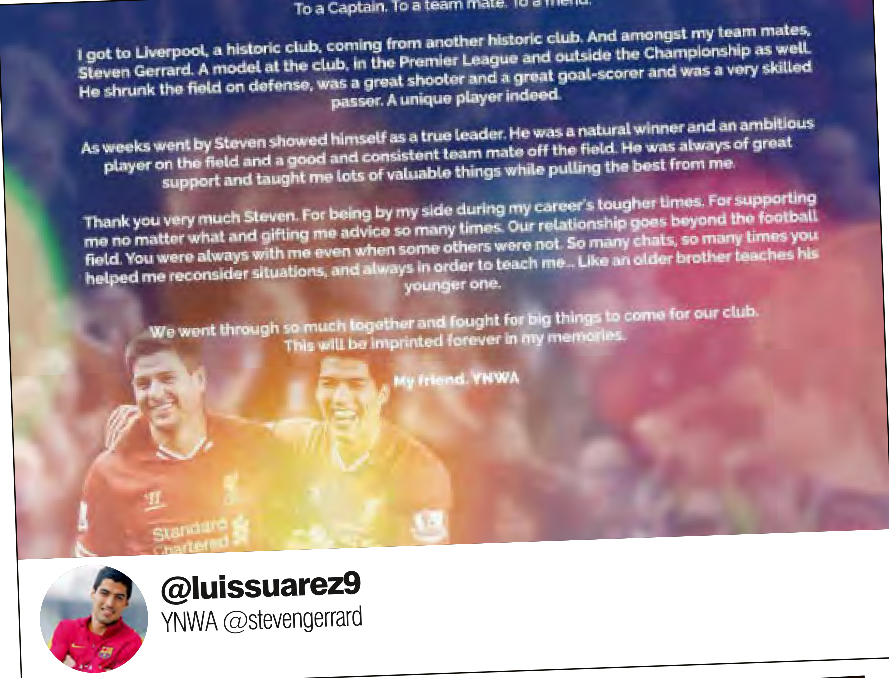


@ec2323
I am not a fancy guy. I live a normal life and I love it! I went along to my barber yesterday for getting ready for the next three points. See the poster in the back [of Steven Gerrard]. A real Liverpool lad! Love that! #YNWA





@theanfieldrap
The King on our plane back. Dalglish! #lfc #liverpool



To a Captain. To a team mate. To a friend.

I got to Liverpool, a historic club, coming from another historic club. And amongst my team mates, Steven Gerrard. A model at the club, in the Premier League and outside the Championship as well. He shrunk the field on defense, was a great shooter and a great goal-scorer and was a very skilled passer. A unique player indeed.

As weeks went by Steven showed himself as a true leader. He was a natural winner and an ambitious player on the field and a good and consistent team mate off the field. He was always of great support and taught me lots of valuable things while pulling the best from me.

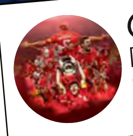
Thank you very much Steven. For being by my side during my career's tougher times. For supporting me no matter what and gifting me advice so many times. Our relationship goes beyond the football field. You were always with me even when some others were not. So many chats, so many times you helped me reconsider situations, and always in order to teach me... Like an older brother teaches his younger one.

We went through so much together and fought for big things to come for our club. This will be imprinted forever in my memories.

My friend. YNWA

@luissuarez9
YNWA @stevengerrard





@stevengerrard
Disney on ice at the Echo arena. Lourdes loved it @disneyonice





@gembon23
Truly honoured & humbled to have received the Vitality Special Recognition Award last night... So proud to play for this great football club #lfc #YNWA





@23_carra
Happy 50th @johnbish100. Thanks for the party & the hangover



@liverpoolfc
Home. #lovelfc



@lfcladies
We had a great time at our awards evening last night.



@amplfc18
They are my life #LILIA #Carla #anfield #loves



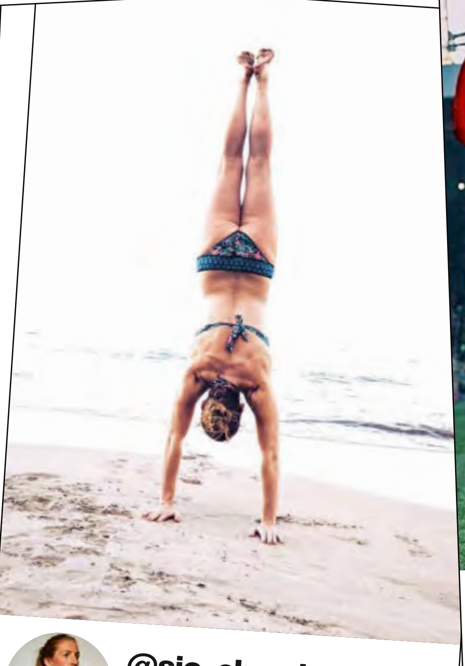
@gladylibsfc
If anyone can, Emre Can. #LFC #YNWA



@officallallana
Fantastic night at the JM7Foundation. A brilliant cause. Great to catch up with my old teammate and close friend @rchap18 too.



@leivalucas
Que Deus abencoe todas essas pessoas que estavam neste terrivel acidente. #chapecoense. God bless all these people that were in this terrible accident. #planecrash



@sio_chamberlain
Just chillin' on the beach! #StLucia



@phil.coutinho
I'd like to thank my family, fans and friends for all the positive messages, that's very important to me.

WHAT'S



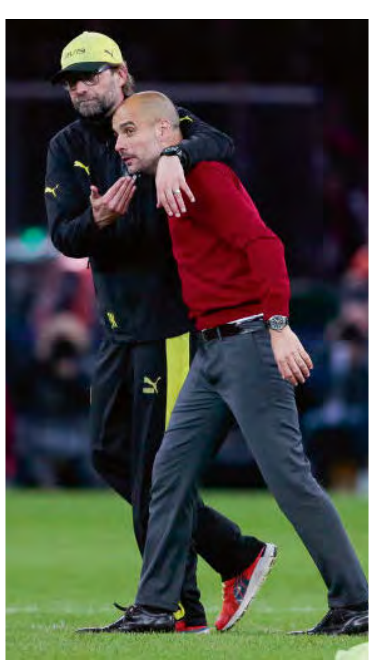
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KOEMAN-KLOPP

Jürgen Klopp will have his first experience of a Goodison derby when the Reds make the short trip to Everton on the Monday before Christmas (8pm). The Reds boss will be hoping for a repeat of the feeling from his first clash against the Blues – a 4-0 win at Anfield back in April.

NYE AT ANFIELD

Liverpool's final game of 2016 sees them host Manchester City in what is set to be a mouthwatering contest at Anfield on New Year's Eve in a tea-time kick-off (5.30pm). The last time Jürgen Klopp came up against Pep Guardiola (below) his Borussia Dortmund side defeated the Catalan's Bayern Munich on penalties following a 1-1 draw in the semi-final of the DFB-Pokal Cup April in 2015. What better way to see out the year than cheering the boys on at Anfield before heading into town to see in 2017?



U23S V ARSENAL

Liverpool's Under-23s bring the curtain down on 2016 when they entertain Arsenal on Monday 12 December at Anfield (7pm). The Reds will be aiming to complete a league double having won 3-1 at the Emirates back in August thanks to two goals from Ben Woodburn and one from Toni Gomes.



YOUTH CUP BEGINS

Neil Critchley's Under-18s face Crystal Palace as they begin their FA Youth Cup campaign on Saturday 17 Dec.

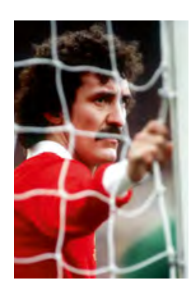
The third-round tie, which kicks-off at 3pm at Tranmere Rovers' Prenton Park, will see the young Reds go in search of a fourth success in the competition having previously triumphed in 1996, 2006 and 2007.

Palace, who compete in the U18s Professional Development League, are sure to provide tough opposition and have already been involved in some high-scoring fixtures this season including a 5-3 win over Sheffield Wednesday, a 7-0 victory at Barnsley and a 5-6 loss to Nottingham Forest.

With Critchley's side also very capable in front of goal – they recently drew 3-3 with Manchester United – it promises to be an entertaining tie.



Birthdays and anniversaries



Terry McDermott 65 on 8 December
Charlie Adam 31 on 10 December
Steve Nicol 55 on 11 December
Stig Inge Bjornebye 47 on 11 December
Stephen Warnock 35 on 12 December
Daniel Agger 32 on 12 December
Martin Skrtel 32 on 15 December
Michael Owen 37 on 14 December
Ryan Babel 30 on 19 December
Gary McAllister 52 on Christmas Day

36 years since Ian Rush made his Liverpool FC debut on 13 December 1980.
91 years since Gordon Hodgson signed for Liverpool on 14 December 1925.
16 years since Igor Biscan made his LFC debut v Ipswich on 10 December 2000.
62 years since LFC's record league defeat, 1-9 at Birmingham City on 11 December 1954.
50 years since Johan Cruyff scored twice at Anfield for Ajax on 14 December 1966.



Alex Manninger is beaten by Steven Gerrard back in 2000

It's 16 years since Alex Manninger's Arsenal lost 4-0 at Anfield on 23 December 2000.

Gerard Houllier's rampant Reds warmed up for the festive season with an emphatic victory over the Gunners with four different men on the scoresheet. Steven Gerarrd found a way past Manninger in the eleventh minute before Michael Owen (61), Nick Barmby (70) and Robbie Fowler (90) made it a day to remember.

The win meant that Liverpool headed into Christmas in fourth place, while Arsenal remained second. Manager Houllier said afterwards: "I still regret that we are possibly five or six points short if we are to have a run at the Champions League, but this team will get better in the second half of the season." Indeed they did, though it would be the cup competitions which saw the season end in glory.

Manninger recalls: "It was not our best day but I have lots of memories of Liverpool and Arsenal – two big teams battling it out with each other."

FIXTURES 2016/2017

AUGUST		
Sun 14	Arsenal (A)	4-3
Sat 20	Burnley (A)	0-2
Tue 23	Burton (A, EFL2)	5-0
Sat 27	Tottenham H (A)	1-1
SEPTEMBER		
Sat 10	Leicester City (H)	4-1
Fri 16	Chelsea (A)	2-1
Tue 20	Derby (A, EFL3)	3-0
Sat 24	Hull City (H)	5-1
OCTOBER		
Sat 1	Swansea City (A)	2-1
Mon 17	Manchester Utd (H)	0-0
Sat 22	West Brom (H)	2-1
Tue 25	Tottenham (H, EFL4)	2-1
Sat 29	Crystal Palace (A)	4-2
NOVEMBER		
Sun 6	Watford (H)	6-1
Sat 19	Southampton (A)	0-0
Sat 26	Sunderland (H)	2-0
Tue 29	Leeds Utd (H, EFL5)	2-0
DECEMBER		
Sun 4	Bournemouth (A)	3-4
Sun 11	West Ham United (H, 4.30pm)	
Wed 14	Middlesbrough (A, 7.45pm)	
Mon 19	Everton (A, 8pm)	
Tue 27	Stoke City (H, 5.15pm)	
Sat 31	Manchester City (H, 5.30pm)	
JANUARY		
Mon 2	Sunderland (A, 3pm)	
6/7/8/9	Plymouth/Newport (H, FAC3)	
Wed 11	Sout'pton (A, EFL SF 1L, 7.45pm,)	
Sun 15	Manchester Utd (A, 4pm)	
Sat 21	Swansea City (H, 12.30pm)	
Wed 25	Southampton (H, EFL SF 2L, 8pm)	
28/29	Emirates FA Cup R4	
Tue 31	Chelsea (H, 8pm)	
FEBRUARY		
Sat 4	Hull City (A, 3pm)	
Sat 11	Tottenham Hotspur (H, 3pm)	
18/19	Emirates FA Cup R5	
Sat 25	Leicester City (A, 3pm)	
Sun 26	EFL Cup final	
MARCH		
Sat 4	Arsenal (H, 3pm)	
Sun 12	Burnley (H, 4pm)/FAC 6	
Sat 18	Manchester City (A, 3pm)	
APRIL		
Sat 1	Everton (H, 3pm)	
Wed 5	Bournemouth (H, 8pm)	
Sat 8	Stoke City (A, 3pm)	
Sun 16	West Brom (A, 3pm)	
Sat 22	Crystal Palace (H, 3pm)	
22/23	Emirates FA Cup SF	
Sat 29	Watford (A, 3pm)	
MAY		
Sat 6	Southampton (H, 3pm)	
Sat 13	West Ham United (A, 3pm)	
Sun 21	Middlesbrough (H, 3pm)	
Sat 27	Emirates FA Cup final	

(LFC score shown first, all dates/KO times subject to change)



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An LFC read through Christmas Day to Thursday 5 January 2017…



Sunday 25 December
Wakey wakey, rise and shine, fling open that bedroom window and climb back in (© K Dodd) cos it's Christmas Day! Has Santa brought you all the LFC prezzies you wanted? If not, tell him your nan's swiped that spare for the City game. If yes, settle down post-turkey with your first LFC read of the holiday season: Jerzy Dudek's autobiography *A Big Pole In Our Goal*. Sample paragraph: "Our [hotel] bathroom in Athens was so small that Pepe Reina had to sit on the toilet with his legs pointing diagonally so that he could close the bathroom door. If he sat normally he would have had his legs sticking out into the bedroom and although we are good friends there are some things you don't want to see!"

Monday 26 December
Psyche yourself up for tomorrow's match by holing up in the shed with a fistful of chipolatas and the Jürgen Klopp biography: "When Klopp started at Dortmund in 2008, the club was in the mid-table doldrums. Within three years he had led Borussia to a Bundesliga title. If he is able to win the Premier League with Liverpool, he'll be similarly revered… For Klopp, the challenge at Liverpool is similar to the one he encountered at Dortmund: to rebuild a sleeping giant and bring it back to its former strength."

Born on this day in 1879: Alex Raisbeck, the club's first superstar who played 341 games and captained the Reds. Barely interesting fact: Liverpool have played ManUnited half-a-dozen times on this day, including thrice in a row between 1978 and 1980.

Tuesday 27 December
Matchday! Stoke City are at Anfield for a 5.15pm kick-off and if you're not at the game, it's live on Sky Sports. Now then, did you know that Steve Nicol once scored against the Potters, in a

2-0 victory in February 1985? What better way to honour this fact than a peek at his new autobiography *5 League Titles and a Packet of Crisps*: "Don't laugh but my main mode of transport in the early stages of my Liverpool career – and the final few months at Ayr United – was my partner Eleanor's white 50cc Honda moped complete with a very feminine storage basket between the handlebar… It was retired to scooter heaven when I purchased my first-ever car, from a certain Mr A Hansen of Liverpool. Eleven hundred pounds in cash was handed over to this dark-haired mystery man with a distinctive Scottish brogue in return for his 'good as new' red Datsun Sunny. He should have been wearing a black-and-white striped jersey and a robber mask."

Wednesday 28 December
We've won, we hope, so let's volley those books over the garden fence and take a moment to remember the only goal scored for Liverpool by defender Nicky Tanner, in a Goodison derby on this day in 1991. It finished 1-1 and *The Times* described his effort thus: "A corner mystifyingly delivered by Dean Saunders, the most expensive forward in British football, was turned into the penalty area by Michael Thomas and promptly given fresh impetus and a differing trajectory by Tanner. The ball rolled through the legs of Neville Southall and although John Ebbrell and Mark Ward were on hand, neither was able to prevent a weak shot from crossing the line."

Thursday 29 December
Steven Caulker, who was on loan at Liverpool last season, turns 25 today, and the last time we actually played on this day was in 2014: a 4-1 win over Swansea City at Anfield. Er, that's it.

Friday 30 December
What does Santa do with fat elves? He sends them to an elf farm. If feeble gags aren't your thing, how about a fabulous fact: 45 years ago, on 30 December 1971, former skipper Ron Yeats left Liverpool after a decade of towering service to join Tranmere.
Big Ron, the Colossus of Bill Shankly's Sixties side, is one of the interviewees in *Liverpool Captains* by Raghnild Lund Ansnes. "Feel the pressure?" he tells her. "Far from it! We got to play football and we thought it was fantastic. Imagine, getting paid to play. We got paid to do something we loved, in front of supporters who appreciated us. And no pressure at all. That's something you put on yourself, if you go around saying: 'We've got to win, we've got to win!' But Shankly sent us out with a completely different message: 'Come on lads, go out on the pitch and have fun!'"



Saturday 31 December
Learn Spanish. Think of a password other than 'password'. Watch the box-set of *The Walking Dead* in under a week. All unrealistic New Year resolutions. You're better off vowing to give that ninth strawberry daiquiri the swerve should we beat City today at Anfield (5.30pm kick-off, live on BT Sport).

Sunday 1 January 2017
New Year's Day, and tomorrow's a Bank Holiday too. Plenty of time to get stuck into *Blood, Sweat and Jason McAteer: A Footballer's Story*, in which the former Red re-lives how he turned down Kenny Dalglish's Blackburn to join Liverpool 21 years ago: "I have to walk out into that suite and tell Kenny that he's not good enough for me. I get the words out as quickly as I can. 'Thanks for the offer, but I have to talk to Roy Evans and Liverpool. If it doesn't work out at Anfield, then I'd gladly consider Blackburn again'. The Scottish accent is getting thicker by the minute as Kenny's blood boils. The offer from Blackburn is withdrawn. The deal is gone no matter what happens with Liverpool. I've never seen this Kenny Dalglish on Match of the Day, but I know where he's coming from."

Monday 2 January
Sunderland away, three o'clock start. It feels like only the other week we beat the Black Cats at Anfield, but that's nothing compared to the old days when teams would play each other home and away on the same festive morning then do it all again in the afternoon before exchanging Christmas cards and satsumas in the nearest alehouse snug.
Remember Maxi Rodriguez? He's 36 today and still running down the wing for Newell's Old Boys, and on this day in 2013 we signed Daniel Sturridge.

Tuesday 3 January
Cup weekend approacheth, just as well cos we're bored now with the divvies wearing Santa hats and sombreros at the darts in Lakeside.

Wednesday 4 January
Happy birthday to James Milner, who turns 31 today, and happy 16th transfer anniversary to Jari Litmanen who joined LFC on a free from Barcelona and helped us to a treble of trophies in season 2000/2001.

All these decorations and gifts are available online and at LFC stores

Thursday 5 January
Down with the Christmas deckies and up with the Mighty Reds, who host Plymouth or Newport in the FA Cup third round this coming weekend. This is also the day in 2005 that Rafael Benitez signed Mauricio Pellegrino, and there's a great chapter with an earlier Rafa recruit in *Ring Of Fire* by Simon Hughes, our final holiday read on this 12th day of Christmas. In it Xabi Alonso recalls: "I loved England from the first minute [I arrived]. It's about the sound of the stadium. When there is silence it is not because they don't care about the game, it's because they are paying attention to what is going on. But when they show emotion – admiration or anger – the noise is like lightning hitting a tree."

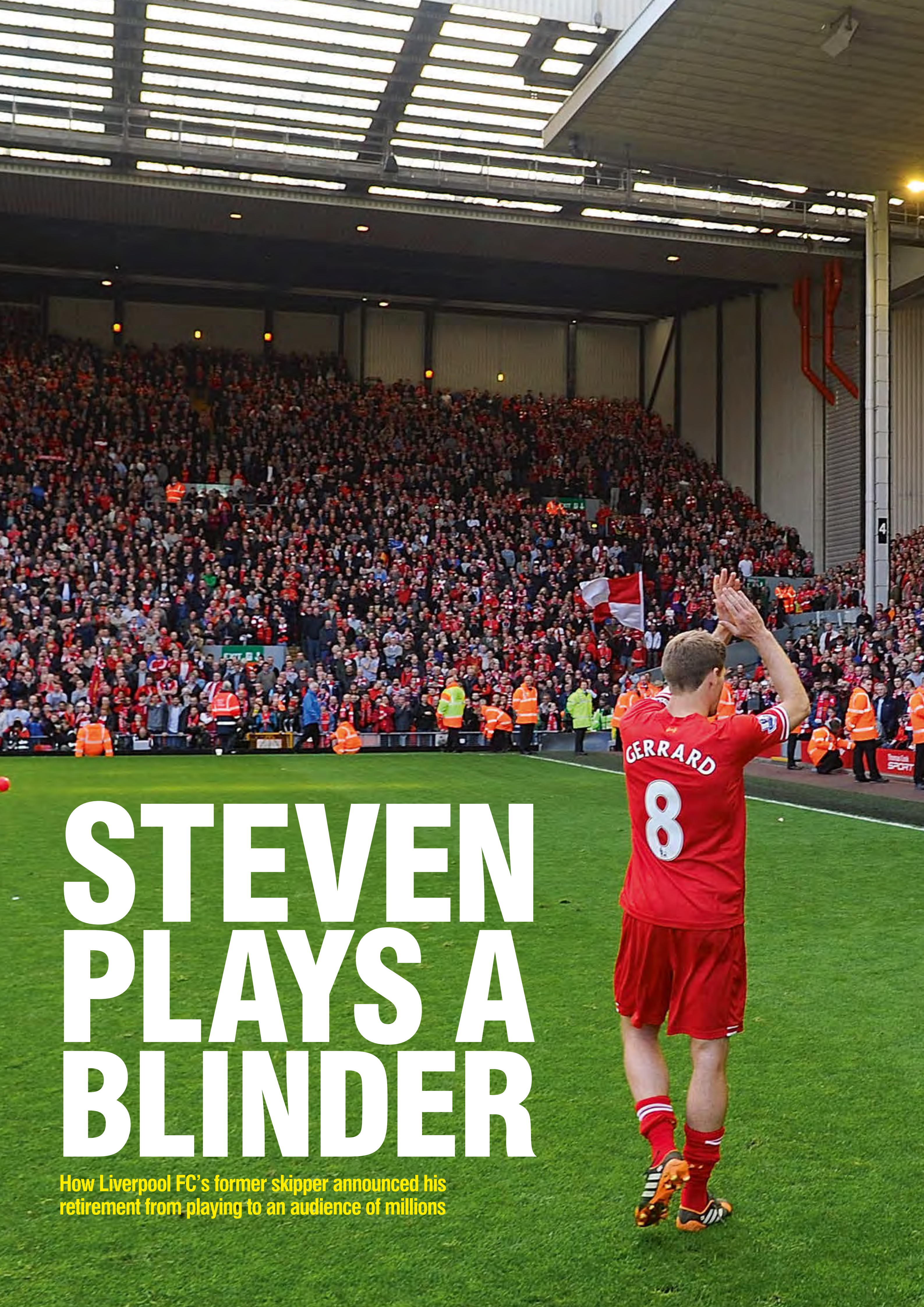




The boss gets a soaking down at Southampton in November – but at which ground did he get his glasses smashed last January? Answer on p98

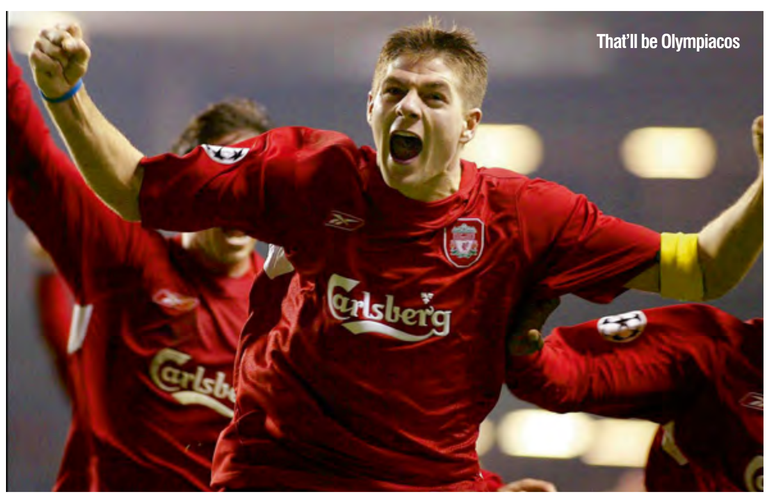
FOOTBA

The boss talks us through the Liverpool FC first team while the kids at All Saints Primary School draw them – brilliantly!



STEVEN PLAYS A BLINDER

How Liverpool FC's former skipper announced his retirement from playing to an audience of millions


That'll be Olympiacos

Not so long ago you'd first hear about the retirement of a LFC legend in that evening's Echo, or perhaps on the wireless or during a local TV news bulletin following a press conference. Times have changed.

Steven Gerrard has 5.3 million followers on his Instagram page. He told them first, on Thursday 24 November, accompanied by a montage of him playing for Liverpool, LA Galaxy and England, and lifting the European, UEFA and FA Cups.

It wasn't completely unexpected. Nobody can play football forever, but hearing that the man who captained Liverpool more than any other, the kid from Huyton who lived the dream and led the Reds to Champions League glory wearing a Hillsborough Family Support Group wristband, was hanging up his boots aged 36 was a poignant moment.

Countless tributes have since been paid. We could've filled this entire magazine with plaudits or even the 186 goals from 710 appearances he struck in a red shirt. But instead we've chosen to reproduce the words Gerrard uploaded to tell the world that his playing days were numbered. Just like on the pitch, he did it his way…

"Following recent media speculation surrounding my future I can confirm my retirement from playing professional football. I have had an incredible career and am thankful for each and every moment of my time at Liverpool, England and LA Galaxy.

"I feel very fortunate to have had the career I've had but none of it would have been possible without the support of so many people. Firstly, I would like to thank everyone at Liverpool Football Club. I am proud to have played for and captained Liverpool for so many years and to have achieved what we achieved during my time at the club.

"I was lucky to play alongside some great players and under some fantastic managers during my time at Anfield and would like to thank each and every one of them, as well as all of the backroom staff at the club for the fantastic support they showed me. I would like to say a special thank you to Steve Heighway, Dave Shannon and Hugh McAuley for believing in me when I was making my way at Liverpool and for giving me the platform to go on and fulfil my dreams.

"Thank you to the amazing fans of Liverpool, England and LA Galaxy for the incredible backing you have given me throughout my career. Your loyalty and support has meant the world.

"I would like to thank Struan Marshall, my agent throughout my career, and the team at Wasserman for all of their support over the past 18 years.

"I AM EXCITED ABOUT THE FUTURE AND FEEL LIKE I STILL HAVE A LOT TO OFFER THE GAME"

"I feel lucky to have had such a close group of friends that I have always been able to count and rely on throughout the course of my career. Thank you to all of you.

"Finally, the most important thank you: to my family. I cannot thank my Mum, Dad and brother Paul enough for their unconditional support over the years, it has meant everything to me. To my wife Alex and children Lily, Lexie and Lourdes, thank you for the constant love and support you've shown me. You've been there through the good times and the bad and without you nothing would have been possible. Thank you for everything.

"I am excited about the future and feel I have a lot to offer the game. I am currently taking my time to consider a number of options and will make an announcement with regards to the next stage of my career very soon."

GO COMPARE

JORDAN HENDERSON		GEORGINIO WIJNALDUM
Senor John Dander	ANAGRAM	I'm a reigning judo owl
27	SCRABBLE SCORE	33
Sunderland	SIGNED FROM	Newcastle United
14	SHIRT NUMBER	5
@jhenderson	INSTAGRAM	@gwijnaldum
1.3 million	INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS	445,000
228/23	LFC GAMES/GOALS	16/1
17 June 1990	BORN	11 November 1990
Venus Williams	SHARES BIRTHDAY WITH	Leonardo DiCaprio
Gemini	STAR SIGN	Scorpio
Steven Gerrard	BOYHOOD HERO	Zinedine Zidane
League Cup (2012)	CUP WINS	KNVB Cup (2008, 2012)
Roy Keane	FIRST EVER MANAGER	Erwin Koeman
0	WORLD CUP GOALS VS BRAZIL	1
1	FIFA 16 COVER APPEARANCES	0

ONE DIRECTION

Club's sporting director delighted to accept new role while Academy director signs fresh deal

Michael Edwards has been appointed Liverpool FC's new sporting director. The 37-year-old initially joined the club in 2011 as head of analytics and was then promoted to director of technical performance before serving as technical director.

He will now be responsible for overall football development and will also review and implement improvements to the training ground-environment and infrastructure.

Manager Jürgen Klopp says: "It's no secret I like the concept of a sporting director and having worked under this model previously I have found it to be nothing but positive. Michael is absolutely the right person for this. He has the knowledge, expertise and personality to flourish in the role and I was delighted when he told me he would be accepting the position."

Edwards adds: "We have a brilliant team of people who all make a huge contribution to the process of player transfers and retention, together with recruitment for the senior team, development squad and our Academy. Jürgen's belief and confidence in what we've done is also welcomed and was a big factor in me accepting this position."

Meanwhile Academy director Alex Inglethorpe has signed a new contract extension. Having joined as Under-21s manager back in 2012, he was promoted in to his current role in August 2014. "I feel I've got the best youth job in football and I'm delighted, first and foremost, to be wanted by the club to stick around for a while longer," he says. "There was no hesitation from my part to commit for as long as they want me. Our manager is a developer of talent, there is no question of that."





THE HAPPY WARRIOR

Roberto Firmino's joy at scoring goals and providing assists is clear to see – but beneath that cheerful exterior is a tough and very determined streak

BOBBY DAZZLER #1





Firmino's cute back-flick in October's 2-1 win over West Bromwich Albion leaves Baggies defender Gareth McAuley no option but to obstruct the Brazilian ace down the Reds left touchline.









Celebrating his brilliant goal at Selhurst Park in October

He has been hailed as the archetypal Jürgen Klopp player. And with goals, assists and a work-rate which sees him cover an average of seven miles per game, what's not to like about the man the Kop knows as Bobby Firmino?

The Brazilian was sidelined with a back injury when Klopp took charge at Anfield, but since starting his first Premier League game under the German at Chelsea, he has been an integral part of the manager's line-up for any number of reasons.

In an age where comparisons are all the rage, Liverpool fans of a certain vintage might see similarities with the club's all-time leading marskman, Ian Rush. True, Firmino may not boast Rushie's prolific strike-rate, but he certainly mirrors the Welshman's work ethic and subscribes to the old adage that defending starts from the front.

There have been numerous examples this season of Firmino putting *Gegenpressing* into action by sprinting back yards to retrieve possession and put the Reds back on the front foot. Soon after his appointment, Klopp admitted that he was looking forward to working with Firmino, having admired the attacker's contribution – and a return a return of 47 goals in 151 appearances for Hoffenheim – during his days in charge of Borussia Dortmund.

Speaking in October 2015, Klopp said: "He's a skilled player. I'd say a year ago for a few months for sure he was the best player in the Bundesliga. From the first day, everyone could see he can become a very, very good player...when I heard Liverpool took him I thought: good choice. He needed time when he came in but he's strong with the ball, physically strong, fast in a good football way and gets his body between opponent and ball."

That strength surprises some people. After all, like Rush, the Brazilian has a naturally 'skinny' physique. But, as skipper Jordan Henderson, recently pointed out, he is stronger than he looks. The man himself agrees with his captain. "Sometimes people see you as skinny and then they think: oh, he is

"BIG DEFENDERS DON'T INTIMIDATE ME – I JUST PLAY MY OWN GAME AND THERE IS NO FEAR AT ALL"

not a strong player. But what matters is what you feel and what you do inside the pitch. No matter how skinny you are, the important thing is how you think psychologically. If you think you are strong, you are really strong and I class myself as a strong player.

"I'm not intimidated by powerful defenders. Maybe when you are younger, playing against huge centre-backs might cause some fear to you but when you are an older player, there is no more fear. You simply play as best as you can and go about your work. That's what you do. There is no fear at all."

Allied to Firmino's physical strength and bravery is a mental strength that



shines through during the course of this interview. He considers each question carefully before offering measured replies. He is softly-spoken and comes across with the same calmness he also demonstrates when making decisions out on the pitch.

He smiles at the use of the Brazilian-Portuguese word *Guerreiro*, which translates as 'warrior', to describe his approach. "Being a professional footballer is not just about determination and talent. You need much more than that. You need to apply yourself in all sorts of ways within your life. You need to have a close relationship with your family, be able to apply yourself and give your best every time you train.

"You need much more than just ability, you need some luck along the way as well but I believe that having stability in your family relationships is important too. Having children [Roberto and his wife Larissa have two daughters] has been important for me as it means that you want to do your best for your family because you have responsibilities. All in all, I believe that you have to have all these ingredients to help you succeed in life. You need to be happy with your life and happy with yourself to spread that happiness among those people close to you."

Eighteen months into his Liverpool career, the 25-year-old has become a regular in the line-up [ahead of the match against West Ham he had missed just one Premier League game this season, at Chelsea in September] and feels at home amid the hurly-burly of the English top flight.

"I think I have had to change the way I play," he explains. "I was adapted to European football after playing in Germany for three years but English football is very different to the Bundesliga. You really notice that the Premier League is much, much faster – the pace is very high and you do need to adjust but this is a type of football that I enjoy.

"Being really honest, I love it here and plan to stay here for many years in the future as the Premier League is really competitve and tests you all the time. It would be massive for me to become a champion here and I would love to be in that position with Liverpool in the future. That's why we are working so hard every day."

Klopp's methods appear to be working. The Reds' defeat at Bournemouth at the start of December was their first reversal in 16 games in all competitions and Firmino believes



Hug from the boss

"YOU NEED TO BE HAPPY AND SPREAD THAT HAPPINESS AMONG THOSE CLOSE TO YOU"



the manager's clarity in his instructions has been a big factor in the strong start to the season. "If we don't execute the tactics that he gives us in the correct manner, of course he is not going to be happy...he is going to be upset. If there are occasions when the manager is not happy, that shows that we have not done those things he has asked us to do, but that pulls us up too.

"It doesn't happen too often but when it does, it has a good effect on us because we want the very best for the team and he wants the very best for our team.

"We have to follow what he wants and when we apply that then everyone is happy. We understand that every time that he shows his unhappiness, it is for the benefit of the team."

While Firmino's willingness to track back and defend comes from his natural work ethic, his success in robbing opponents to start counter-attacks may be born from a background which saw various positional changes during his youth career. Those switches gradually resulted in steady advances up the field as he moved from defence to midfield and then striker.

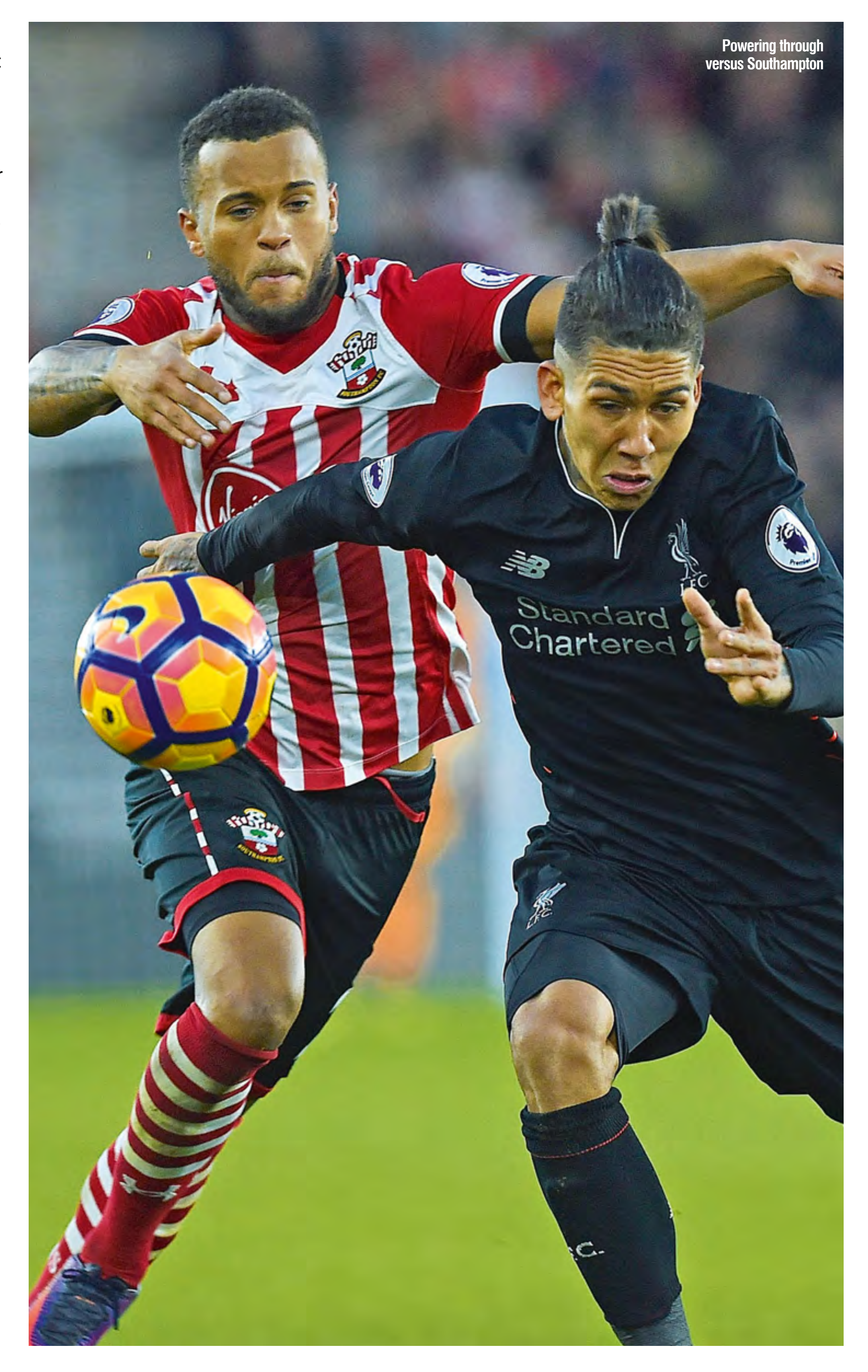
"IF IT WAS UP TO ME I'D PLAY IN EVERY CORNER OF THE GROUND, THAT'S JUST THE WAY I AM!"

"It is true that when I was younger I played as a right-back," he explains.

"I also played as a central defender but I realised that I could dominate the ball quite calmly so I started playing further forward in front of the back-four. After a while I thought that I was quite offensive so when I was 17 or 18, I started playing as a more forward-thinking midfielder. That's how I eventually ended up playing in the areas like I am today.

"If it depended on me, I would play in every corner of the ground because that's the type of player I am but obviously it alters depending on the needs of the team. At the moment I am playing upfront but I can play anywhere the manager asks me to. My preference is to be inside the area, near where the goals are scored – that's my preference! But my main aim is to be helpful to the team in achieving what we need to achieve."

Being close to the goal had seen Firmino score five times in the Premier League and also produce three assists by the start of December, moments he admits always give him the most incredible thrill.



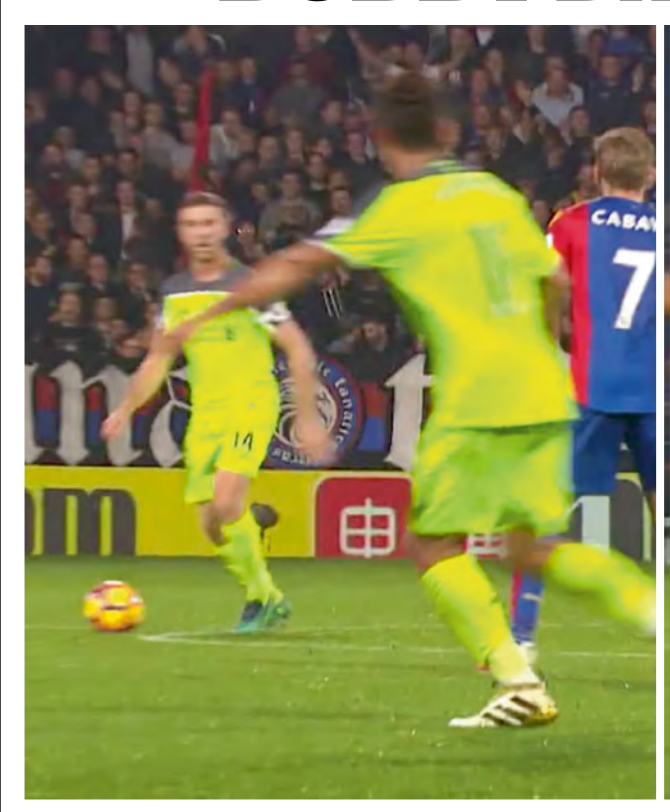
Powering through versus Southampton

"When you provide an assist, it's not an inexplicable feeling because I am going to describe it! It is a very good feeling because when you make a good assist and your team-mate scores a goal, it is a fantastic sensation because you have helped your team-mate and you have helped your team.

"When you score yourself, it is different. In the two seconds or so where you have the opportunity to score a goal and then you put the ball in the net, it's an excitement, a buzz... let's put it that way. That really is an indescribable happiness. It is difficult to explain that feeling because you know that you have helped yourself and your team. It's always an exciting moment for a centre-forward to score a goal, whichever way it comes."

Firmino has always had an instinct for scoring timely goals. He helped Anfield usher in the expanded Main Stand in September by scoring twice on its 'debut' against Leicester City. It is an instinct he can trace back back to his formative days in Brazil when he was on trial at Figueirense. "It is true

BOBBY DAZZLER #2





The Reds are 3-2 up at Crystal Palace when a through-ball from Jordan Henderson finds Firmino who finishes deftly to extend the team's unbeaten run to eleven games in all competitions.

"PROVIDING AN ASSIST IS A FANTASTIC FEELING BECAUSE YOU'VE HELPED A TEAM-MATE"

that I scored two overhead kicks in my first training session. I have always practised a lot and I trained a lot for those trials. After those two overhead kicks in the afternoon, I received an invitation in the evening telling me the news that I had passed the trials so I was obviously very happy about that."

Liverpool fans have revelled in the attacking talents of two boys from Brazil, and both Firmino and Philippe Coutinho are among the nominees for the 2016 Samba Gold award recognising the best Brazilian player in European football (won by Barcelona's Neymar last year).

The pair have developed a fine understanding on and off the pitch. "My friendship with Philippe has happened quite naturally. I had spoken with him while we were away with the Selecao [Brazil national team] and I could see straightaway that he was a decent, warm person. When I came over to Liverpool I also met up with Lucas and our friendship has also developed since my arrival. We are all quite close friends and I am happy with the way things are."

If Firmino is loving life at Liverpool, there is little doubt that the fans are enjoying watching our no11. A sign of their affection has seen supporters christen him 'Bobby' and regular refrains of *Bobby Firmino!* now echo around Anfield and wherever the travelling Kop may be stationed. Such an example came at Selhurst Park in October when his clever dink over Steve Mandanda sealed the Reds' 4-2 win at Crystal Palace.

Firmino smiles at the mention of his nickname and even offers a gentle and tuneful reprise.

"I love hearing the fans calling my name and at the moment they are calling me Bobby Firmino! It is exciting when they are shouting your name and singing for you. That is a sign that we are doing something well and also a sign that they love what you are contributing for the team and an indicator of their overall support for the team."

It's undoubtedly been a good year for Roberto Firmino but he hopes 2017 can be even better. "Unfortunately we lost two finals last season and that has still left me without a trophy or medals. At the moment Liverpool are doing well and that creates a willingness to win something this season and that is what we are aiming for. We are playing to win titles in 2017 and we are doing our best to achieve that because that will make us excel in our careers as professional footballers.

"That is what we all want for each other, for the fans and for the club."

Remembering Chapecoense

This interview took place at the end of the week when 71 people, including 19 Chapecoense players, were killed in an air crash on the way to Colombia for the first leg of the Copa Sudamericana final in Medellin. Roberto said: "It was very sad to wake up in the morning and learn about the news. Everyone in Brazil is sad about what happened and the football family is very sad about this accident. It has touched all of us, particularly as footballers who do a lot of travelling all the time. The football family in Brazil is very close and everyone is dealing with it in their own private way. Nobody knows 100 per cent exactly the reason why this accident was caused. It is a terrible tragedy and we are all praying for the families of those who have been lost and that things will improve as quickly as possible."





The dynamic duo after another great goal

Interview William Hughes. **Portrait photography** John Powell.



Havant & Waterlooville at Anfield in 2008

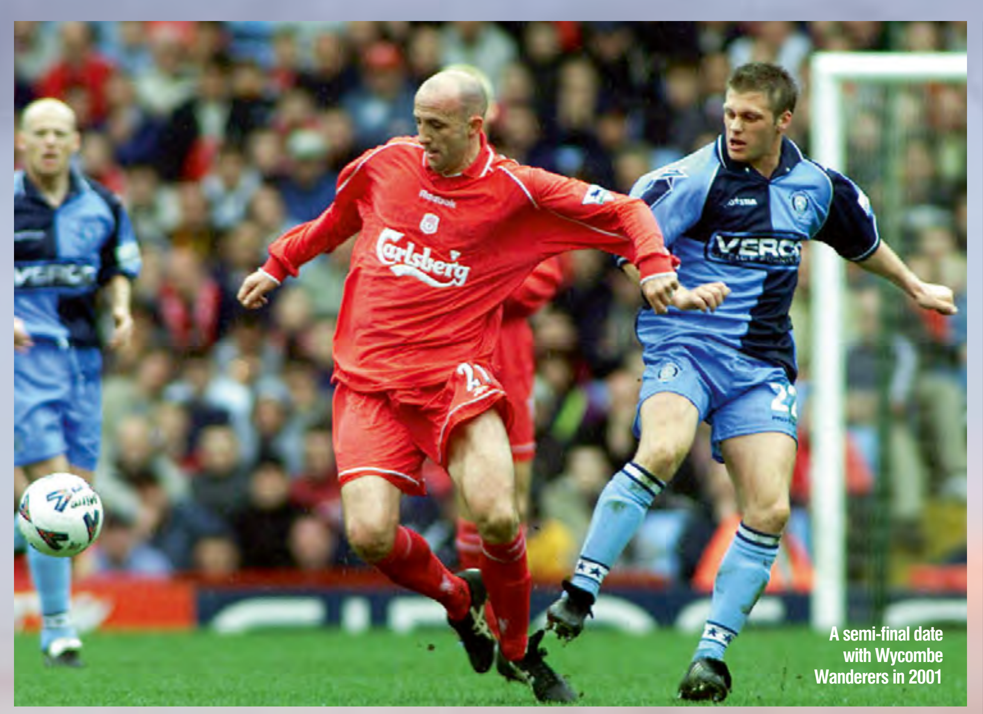
Liverpool Football Club. In existence since 1892. Played over 5,540 competitive matches. Won loads of trophies. So surely there can't be any football league clubs that haven't been opponents for the Redmen at least once over the last 124 years?

PLAYED NOT PLAYED

Eleven of the other 91 clubs currently in England's top four divisions have never played the Reds in a competitive fixture. Indeed, when our season kicked off in August there was even a Championship team – Nigel Clough's Burton Albion – that Liverpool had never met, only for the EFL Cup second-round draw to knock the Brewers off the not-played list. A 5-0 win made Liverpool's maiden trip to the Pirelli Stadium a goal-filled one, but it got us thinking ahead of our FA Cup third round tie against Plymouth Argyle or Newport County: who else have the Reds NEVER played?

Turns out there are still eleven clubs lurking in the lower leagues that the Reds have never faced in league or cup, and several more that we've not

A first encounter with Burton Albion earlier this season



A semi-final date with Wycombe Wanderers in 2001

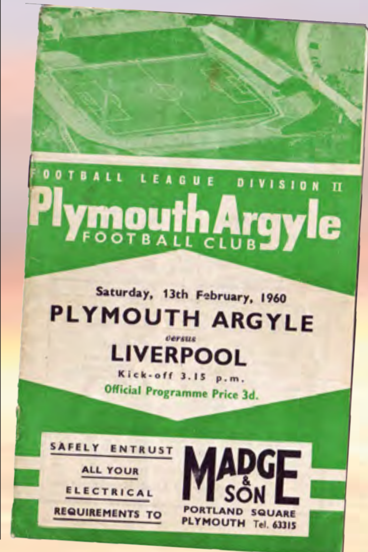
crossed paths with for yonks.

Take Sheffield Wednesday, for instance, a club that Liverpool have played a total of 119 times but never since the turn of the Millennium. The Owls last visited Anfield in December 1999 in a game best remembered for a young Steven Gerrard scoring the first of his 186 Liverpool goals.

Then there's Nottingham Forest. An opponent on 116 occasions, including in the European Cup, League Cup final and, tragically, the 1989 FA Cup semi-final at Hillsborough. We haven't encountered them since a 2-2 Premier League draw at the City Ground in 1999. For Kopites who recall Forest being our biggest rivals for a spell in the 1970s, that's quite a gap without a game.

Brentford are the current Championship team that Liverpool haven't played for the longest. The Bees buzzed up to Anfield for an FA Cup quarter-final in 1989 and were stung 4-0 with John Barnes scoring one of his most famous Anfield goals after gliding past a couple of defenders.

Head down to League One and you'll find a couple of clubs that have never played the Redmen, for differing reasons. Reformed (for a second time) in 1997, Fleetwood Town were pre-season opponents last summer, Jürgen Klopp's men running out 5-0 winners at Highbury Stadium. We also beat the Cod Army 6-1 in a friendly at Blackpool's Bloomfield Road in 2003.





Beating Brentford in the FA Cup in 1989

But never have we met competitively.

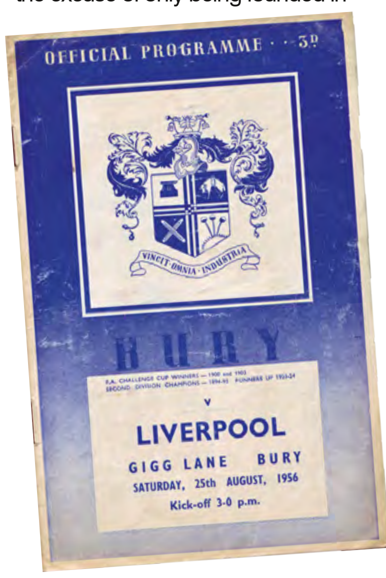
MK Dons will also be new opponents some day. They were formed when Wimbledon relocated to Milton Keynes in 2003, but the club officially considers itself to have been founded when adopting its present name a year later. In 2015 we met AFC Wimbledon, a phoenix club formed in 2002 by Dons supporters opposed to the MK relocation. It means the Wimbledon that the Reds played 36 times between 1986 and 2000 no longer exists.

Gillingham, the only league club in Kent, were formed a year after LFC in 1893. But despite 247 aggregate years of history between us we've met only once, in an FA Cup second-round clash at Anfield in 1914 that Liverpool won 2-0. "Some of the visitors' supporters appeared to have a grievance," reported the *Football Echo*, "but they did not seem used to finding their way about in a large crowd." The Gills haven't found their way back to Anfield since.

You've got to go back to 1962 for a clash with Scunthorpe United. It's 1979 when Southend United were last in town, and 1980 since we played Bury, the only club to have netted over 1,000 goals in all four divisions.

There are 24 clubs in League Two and you've never seen nine of them play LFC, mainly because we've never been in the same division as Barnet, Cambridge United, Cheltenham Town, Colchester United, Crawley Town, Hartlepool United, Morecambe, Stevenage or potential third round opponents Newport County.

However, when you consider how long ago eight of those clubs were formed – Barnet (1888), Cheltenham (1887), Crawley (1896), Hartlepool (1908), Cambridge (1912), Newport (1912, reformed 1989), Morecambe (1920) and Colchester (1937) – then it's perhaps somewhat surprising that we've never come out of the hat together, nor have we met in any friendlies. At least Stevenage have the excuse of only being founded in 1976, six months after Liverpool had won a record ninth league title.



Speaking of the top flight, it's not that long ago when Liverpool were taking on Portsmouth (2010) and Blackpool (2011) in the Premier League. But by far the most unusual team to appear on our 'played' list is Wycombe Wanderers as neither club has visited each other's ground. Our only encounter came in the 2001 FA Cup semi-final at Villa Park when goals from Emile Heskey and Robbie Fowler ended a remarkable cup run for the Second Division side who were managed by...Lawrie Sanchez. Guess which goal was showed over-and-over again that weekend?

Bill Shankly was in charge the last time the Reds faced possible third round opponents Plymouth Argyle, in our 1962 promotion-winning season, and Leyton Orient, who went up with the Reds in 62 and straight back down in 63 with their last victory in the top division coming against Liverpool at Brisbane Road. The current League Two team we've not met for the longest period of time is Accrington Stanley. Exactly.

There are also eight Football Conference sides that have shared a pitch with Liverpool including Lincoln City (in the old Second Division) and four local clubs in Tranmere Rovers, Southport, Chester and Wrexham, all of whom have been home to Liverpool Reserves/Under-23s/U21s during the Premier League era.

Conference club Gateshead, who knocked us out of the FA Cup when in Division Three North in 1950, also have the claim to fame of being one of only two domestic clubs in the top five divisions to have 100 per cent records against Liverpool. The other is Peterborough United who shocked Graeme Souness' side in the League Cup in 1991.

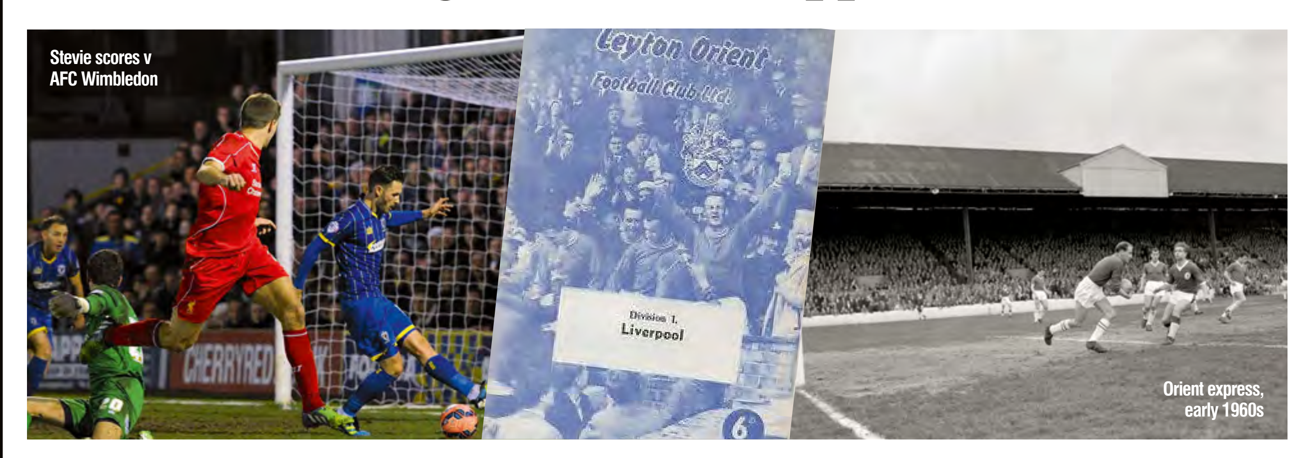
Liverpool did visit Torquay's Plainmoor for a friendly in 1935, while Klopp and his players trained at Eastleigh's Silverlake Stadium ahead of last season's 6-1 League Cup win at Southampton – but we haven't played against a team with 'East' in their name since a friendly against East Stirling in 1897.

And below the Conference? There are hundreds of non-league clubs that have never kicked a pig's bladder around the same patch of grass as the mighty Reds. But Altrincham, Stockport County, Gainsborough Trinity, Worcester City (all National League North), Nantwich and Workington (both Northern Premier League), Northwich Victoria (Northern Premier League Division One South), Havant & Waterlooville (Isthmian League Premier Division) and Newtown FC (Welsh Premier League) have all done so in the FA Cup. Stockport were particularly stubborn League Cup opponents in 1984, taking Joe Fagan's European Champions to extra-time in the second leg of a second-round tie at Anfield!

So, next time you're waiting for a ball with Liverpool's number on it to be plucked from the FA's big plastic tumbler, keep an eye out for those clubs we've never yet met as potential opponents.

Bring on yer Hartlepool United, bring on yer Newports by the score...

THE LAST TIME WE MET...



Stevie scores v AFC Wimbledon

Orient express, early 1960s

CHAMPIONSHIP

Aston Villa (A) **14.02.16** Premier League **Won 6-0**
Barnsley (H) **16.02.08** FA Cup **Lost 1-2**
Birmingham City (H) **23.04.11** Premier League **Won 5-0**
Blackburn Rovers (A) **08.05.15** FA Cup **Won 1-0**
Brentford (H) **18.03.89** FA Cup **Won 4-0**
Brighton HA (H) **19.02.12** FA Cup **Won 6-1**
Bristol City (H) **25.01.94** FA Cup **Lost 0-1**
Burton Albion (A) **23.08.16** League Cup **Won 5-0**
Cardiff City (A) **22.03.14** Premier League **Won 6-3**
Derby County (A) **20.09.16** League Cup **Won 3-0**
Fulham (A) **12.02.14** Premier League **Won 3-2**
Huddersfield Town (A) **12.12.99** FA Cup **Won 2-0**
Ipswich Town (H) **04.12.02** League Cup **Drew 1-1 (5-4 pens)**
Leeds United (H) **29.11.16** League Cup **Won 2-0**
Newcastle United (H) **23.04.16** Premier League **Drew 2-2**
Norwich City (A) **23.01.16** Premier League **Won 5-4**
Nottm Forest (A) **05.04.99** Premier League **Drew 2-2**
Preston NE (A) **03.02.09** FA Cup **Won 2-0**
QPR (H) **02.05.15** Premier League **Won 2-1**
Reading (A) **13.04.13** Premier League **Drew 0-0**
Rotherham United (H) **06.01.01** FA Cup **Won 3-0**
Sheffield Wednesday (H) **05.12.99** Premier League **Won 4-1**
Wigan Athletic (A) **02.03.13** Premier League **Won 4-0**
Wolverhampton W (A) **31.01.12** Premier League **Won 3-0**

LEAGUE ONE

AFC Wimbledon (A) **05.01.15** FA Cup **Won 2-1**
Bolton Wanderers (A) **04.02.15** FA Cup **Won 2-1**
Bradford City (A) **01.05.01** Premier League **Won 2-0**
Bristol Rovers (H) **11.02.92** FA Cup **Won 2-1**
Bury (H) **16.02.80** FA Cup **Won 2-0**
Charlton Athletic (H) **13.05.07** Premier League **Drew 2-2**
Chesterfield (A) **06.10.92** League Cup **Won 4-1**
Coventry City (A) **28.04.01** Premier League **Won 2-0**
Fleetwood Town Never Met
Gillingham (H) **31.01.1914** FA Cup **Won 2-0**
Millwall (A) **26.10.04** League Cup **Won 3-0**
MK Dons Never Met
Northampton T (H) **22.09.10** League Cup **Drew 2-2 (2-3 pens)**
Oldham Athletic (H) **04.01.14** FA Cup **Won 2-0**
Oxford United (A) **26.12.87** First Division **Won 3-0**
Peterborough United (A) **03.12.91** League Cup **Lost 0-1**
Port Vale (A) **03.01.99** FA Cup **Won 3-0**
Rochdale (H) **06.01.96** FA Cup **Won 7-0**
Scunthorpe United (A) **20.01.62** Division Two **Drew 1-1**
Sheffield United (A) **24.02.07** Premier League **Won 4-0**
Shrewsbury Town (A) **18.02.96** FA Cup **Won 4-0**
Southend Utd (H) **17.01.79** FA Cup **Won 3-0**
Swindon Town (H) **11.12.93** Premier League **Drew 2-2**
Walsall (A) **12.10.88** League Cup **Won 3-1**

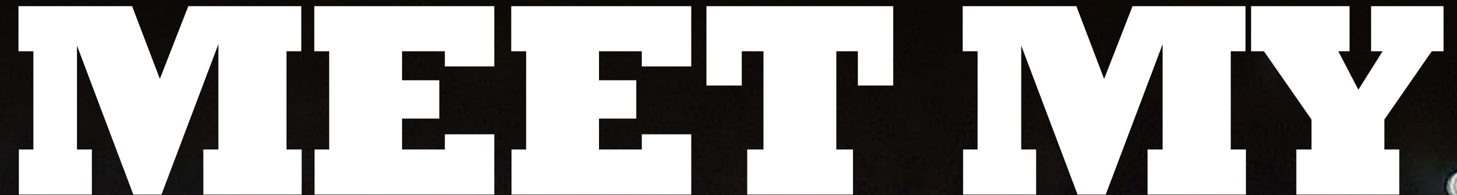
LEAGUE TWO

Accrington Stanley (H) **07.01.56** FA Cup **Won 2-0**
Barnet Never Met
Blackpool (A) **12.01.11** Premier League **Lost 1-2**
Cambridge United Never Met
Carlisle Utd (H) **23.09.15** League Cup **Drew 1-1 (3-2 pens)**
Cheltenham Town Never Met
Colchester United Never Met
Crawley Town Never Met
Crewe Alexandra (H) **23.09.08** League Cup **Won 2-1**
Doncaster Rovers (A) **08.01.74** FA Cup **Won 2-0**
Exeter City (H) **20.01.16** FA Cup **Won 3-0**
Grimsby Town (H) **09.10.01** League Cup **Lost 1-2**
Hartlepool United Never Met
Leyton Orient (A) **02.05.63** Division One **Lost 1-2**
Luton Town (H) **15.01.08** FA Cup **Won 5-0**
Mansfield Town (A) **06.01.13** FA Cup **Won 2-1**
Morecambe Never Met
Newport County Never Met
Notts County (H) **27.08.13** League Cup **Won 4-2**
Plymouth Argyle (A) **28.04.62** Second Division **Won 3-2**
Portsmouth (H) **15.03.10** Premier League **Won 4-1**
Stevenage Never Met
Wycombe Wanderers (N) **08.04.01** FA Cup **Won 2-1**
Yeovil Town (A) **04.01.04** FA Cup **Won 2-0**

FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

Aldershot Town (H) **02.01.71** FA Cup **Won 1-0**
Barrow Never Met
Boreham Wood Never Met
Braintree Town Never Met
Bromley Never Met
Chester (H) **09.01.46** FA Cup **Won 2-1**
Dagenham & Redbridge Never Met
Dover Athletic Never Met
Eastleigh Never Met
Forest Green Rovers Never Met
Gateshead (A) **10.01.53** FA Cup **Lost 0-1**
Guiseley Never Met
Lincoln City (H) **25.02.61** Second Division **Won 2-0**
Macclesfield Town Never Met
Maidstone United Never Met
North Ferriby United Never Met
Solihull Moors Never Met
Southport (H) **29.01.27** FA Cup **Won 3-1**
Sutton United Never Met
Torquay United Never Met
Tranmere Rovers (A) **11.03.01** FA Cup **Won 4-2**
Woking Never Met
Wrexham (A) **17.01.78** League Cup **Won 3-1**
York City (H) **18.02.86** FA Cup **Won 3-1**

Words: Chris McLoughlin



LALLANA

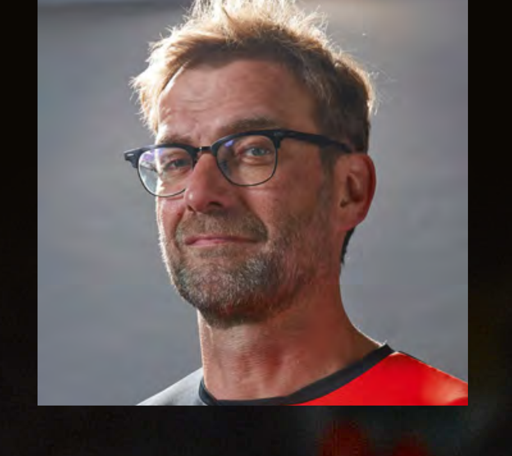
HE CAN PLAY DIFFERENT POSITIONS, HE'S QUICK, MENTALLY STRONG, A SMART PLAYER. HE IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE TEAM, AS A PERSON AND AS A PLAYER

Coutinho

Good football player. Very good football player. Everyone knew it before, I think. He's now 24, his work rate is outstanding

The players, by the manager. It's that simple

TEAM



MANE

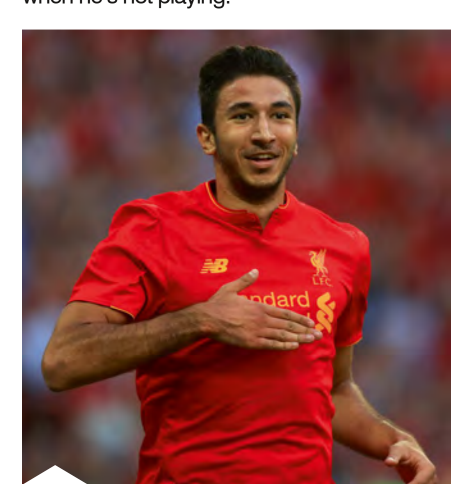
"HE HAS A LOT OF QUALITY, WORKS HARD AND HAS A VERY GOOD GOALSCORING RECORD. LST SUMMER HE WAS PASSIONATE ABOUT JOINING THE CLUB AND PLAYING FOR OUR FANTASTIC FANS AND THEY'VE BEEN JUST AS EXCITED ABOUT SEEING HIM PUT ON A LIVERPOOL SHIRT AS ME"



Henderson
"He always wants to work and improve. Don't be surprised either that Jordan is top of the passing [statistics]. Look at the details, too: at 25 he is a very, very responsible person and a really good skipper."



Lucas
"It's not too easy for Lucas when he doesn't play, he's a different person! Everything is okay but I know that it's not easy for him when he's not playing."



Grujic
"He's a tall boy but quick and good at technical things. He can play passes and can dribble. But he is young, so he has to develop. He will do this at Liverpool, so everything is okay."



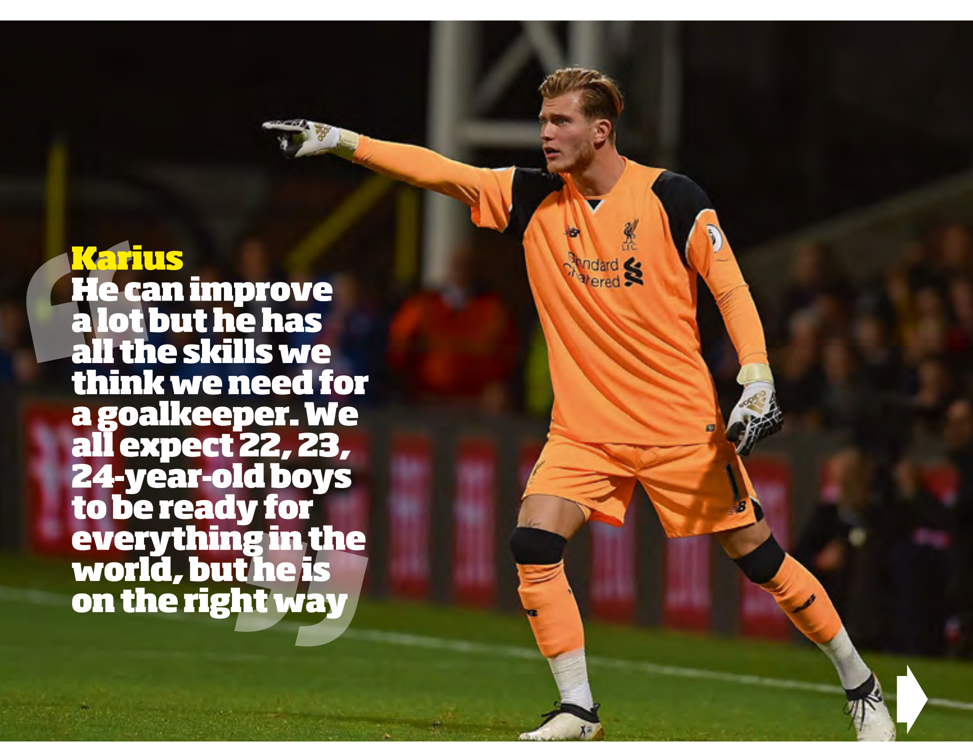

Wijnaldum
"A real footballer with a special kind of football smartness – he is really versatile and that's how it should work. For him it's quite easy."

Milner
"Milner? The complete football player, the perfect professional."

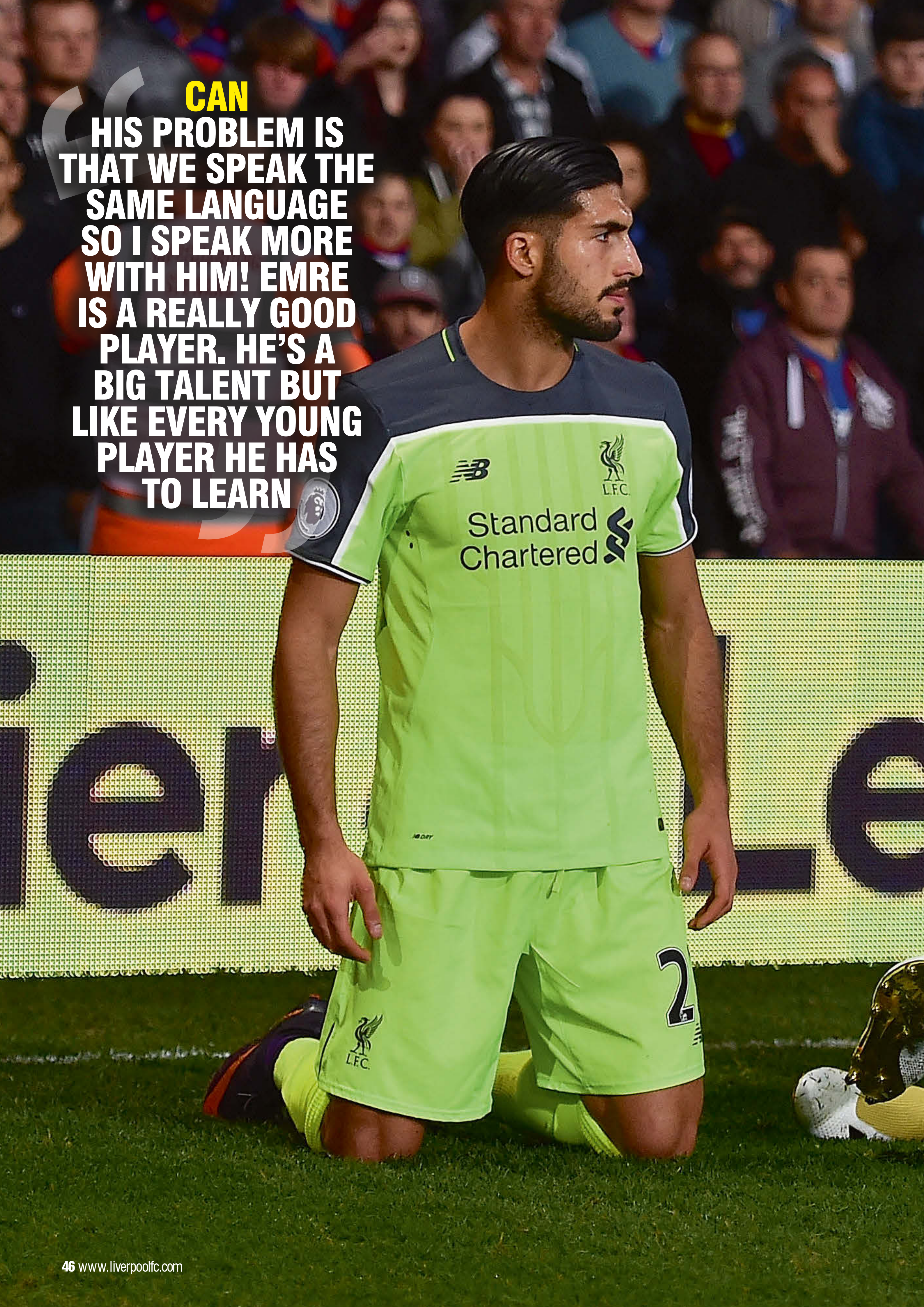


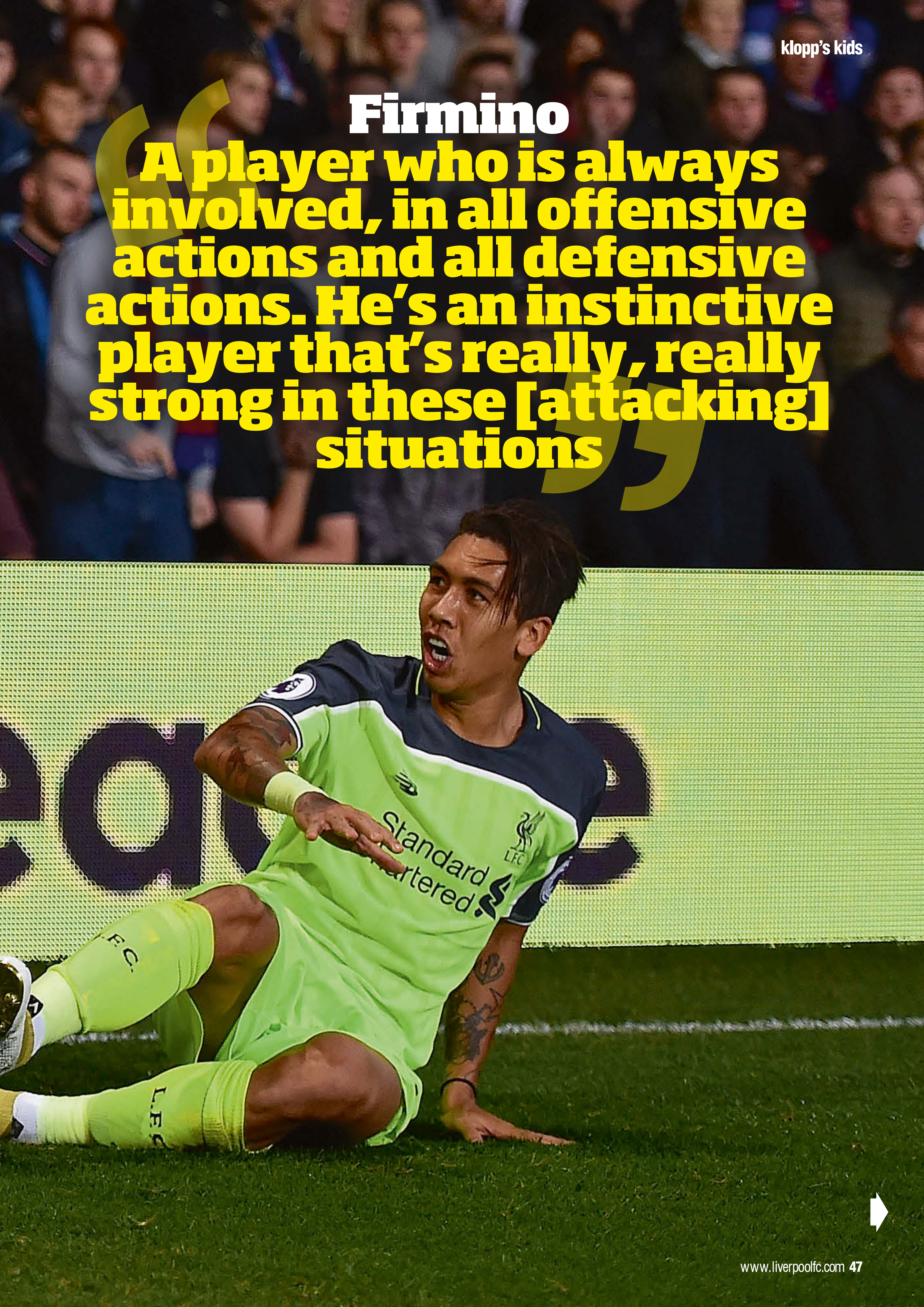
Clyne
"'Clyney' is a machine who plays loads of games and rarely gets injured."





Karius
"He can improve a lot but he has all the skills we think we need for a goalkeeper. We all expect 22, 23, 24-year-old boys to be ready for everything in the world, but he is on the right way"


CAN
HIS PROBLEM IS THAT WE SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE SO I SPEAK MORE WITH HIM! EMRE IS A REALLY GOOD PLAYER. HE'S A BIG TALENT BUT LIKE EVERY YOUNG PLAYER HE HAS TO LEARN
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Firmino

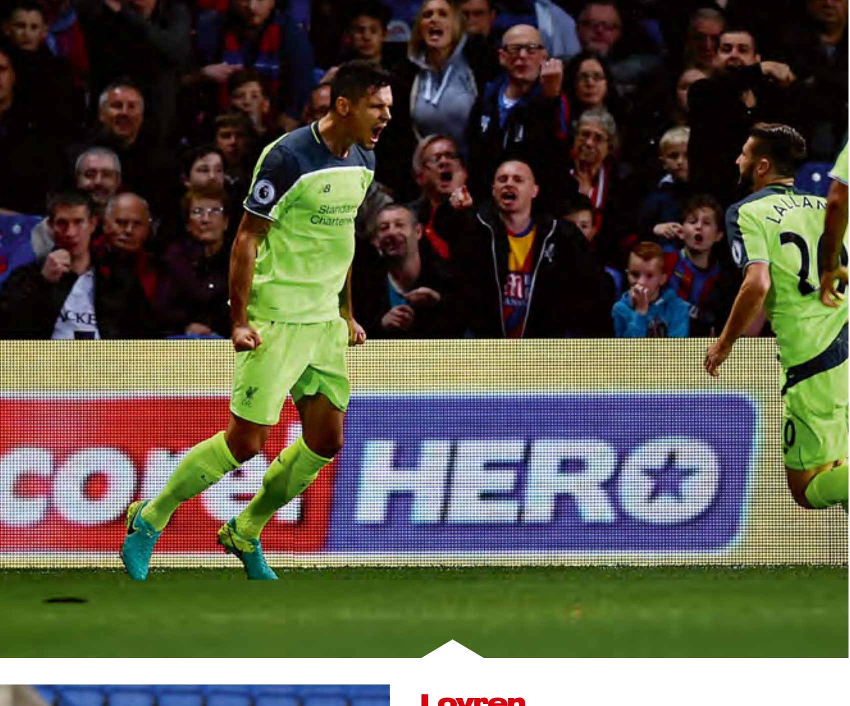
"A player who is always involved, in all offensive actions and all defensive actions. He's an instinctive player that's really, really strong in these [attacking] situations"

Ojo
"Sheyi is a wonderful player, that's for sure, and his future is 100 per cent at Liverpool."



Matip
"Physically strong, a really tall boy – taller than me! He's quick, flexible in his movements and technically good. He has played in different systems, with four or three defenders, and he scores goals. It's a package."







Ilori
"The [coaching] staff are all full of praise about his attitude which is good."

Lovren
"Since I came here he gets better and better. He has shown how strong he is and for me I'm not surprised about this – I knew about his quality."



Klavan
"He will bring us really good qualities with his defensive intelligence and ability on the ball, and he is a left-footed player so will give us extra balance."



Randall
"Connor is a full-back and he's a runner and he knows he has clear direction. I like this."





Mignolet
Simon is, for us, perfect because he's a smart guy, he's young enough to develop in the things he has to develop and he gives us all a good feeling when he's in the starting line-up



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Liverpool Football Club would like all supporters to experience an environment free from any forms of discrimination.

If you witness any anti-social or discriminatory behaviour, we ask you to report this to your nearest steward in confidence or you can

text **+44 (0)7479 638022**

providing details of the incident and the location in the stadium.

The Club will investigate all complaints.

We thank you for your continued support.

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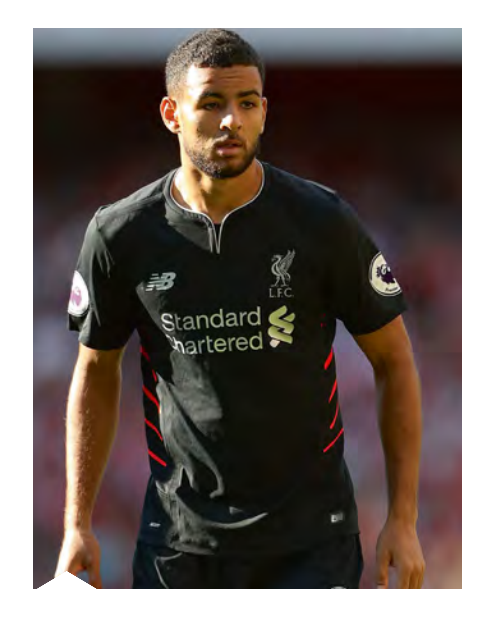


EJARIA OVIE – WHAT A PLAYER

ORIGI

I wanted to take him to Dortmund but Liverpool bought him. He is a very good player. He is young, very fast, a good technician


STURRIDGE
THAT'S HIS TALENT, THAT'S HIS STRENGTH - HE'S A FINISHER. HE'S A REALLY GOOD STRIKER, NO DOUBT ABOUT THIS. I WAS NEVER IN DOUBT ABOUT HIM, EVEN WHEN HE DIDN'T SCORE
MORENO
WHEN YOU SEE HE'S QUICK, GOOD LEFT FOOT, GOOD ATTITUDE, RUNS UP AND DOWN, UP AND DOWN, IT'S NICE FOR A MANAGER WORKING WITH BOYS LIKE THIS
STURRIDGE
15
Standard Chartered



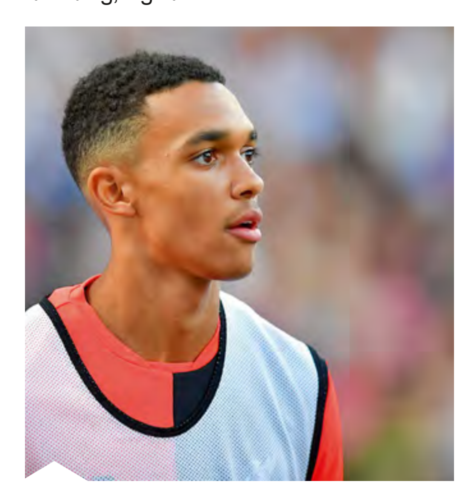
Stewart

"I have said a few times that Kevin Stewart is the best challenger in the squad. One-on-one he is really 'ugly' to play against. He's a good footballer.



Chirivella

"A wonderful player. He is a passing player and a big, big talent."



Alexander-Arnold

"He spends most of his time with the first team in this moment and is progressing each and every day."



Ings

"For anyone lucky enough to know Danny, or even meet Danny, you'll understand why there has been so much emotion towards him [after his injury]. He is full of energy and positivity and at Melwood people enjoy being in his company"

Brannagan

"For his age he brings everything you need for a midfield player; he wants to play football, he's strong, he's clear, he's cool."





Gomez

"We will look after this player because we believe him to be special and someone who has a big future here. We believe he has all the attributes to be a top player for Liverpool."



Manninger

"Alex has played at a high level in his career in the top division in England, Germany, Spain, Italy and Austria for some very big teams - not many people can say that!"



"I DON'T THINK IT'S GOOD WHEN THINGS ARE TOO EASY – I LIKE CHALLENGES"

Contrary to the old saying you don't have to be mad to be a goalkeeper, but you do need confidence – and Loris Karius has it in spades



While many of his team-mates were away with their countries during the November international break, Loris Karius was training hard at Melwood. That the 23-year-old wasn't called up for Germany's World Cup qualifier in San Marino or an international friendly against Italy at the San Siro wasn't a criticism of the Liverpool goalkeeper's form, more a reflection of the embarrassment of riches from which national-team boss Joachim Low has to select.

Barcelona are 3/1 favourites to win the Champions League. Their first-choice keeper is Germany's Marc-Andre ter Stegen. Bayern Munich are 10/3 second-favourites to win the Champions League. Their first-choice keeper is Manuel Neuer, Germany's number one and a man regarded by many as the best goalie in the business.

And then there's Bayer Leverkusen's rising star Bernd Leno who, in 2011, became the youngest-ever goalkeeper to appear in the Champions League at the age of 19 and was given an opportunity against Italy when Neuer went down with a virus.

Karius may be now be Liverpool's no1 keeper following his summer move from Mainz 05, but as an ambitious individual who aspires to play for his country it must

be frustrating to have so much competition just to get into the Germany squad? At least it would be if you weren't as self-assured or took seeming negatives as a positive in the way Karius does.

"I see the competition as a positive," he says, matter-of-factly as we chat at Melwood ahead of a mid-afternoon training session on a wet Thursday afternoon. "Germany is a big football nation and I would rather it be hard to get into the team than play for some country where there is no competition but you never have a chance of winning a trophy for your country. It's a good thing that we have so much quality, but of course this makes it a bit harder for me to get into the team.

"I've said before that I don't really put myself under any pressure to play for the national team. If it's going to happen it will happen, but I feel like I'm getting close to it. Of course Manuel Neuer is the number one and he has earned that status, but behind him I don't have to be scared of any competition. It is really, really close between us and if I do well this season with Liverpool I think there will be an invite for me to join the squad for sure."

Given Germany have kept ten clean-sheets in their last 12 games and Neuer is only 30 (eight years younger than Gianluigi Buffon who won a European record-equalling 167th cap for Italy in that recent 0-0 draw with the Germans) then he's got quite a battle on his hands. But you can't help but admire his self-belief. He's a lad who oozes confidence.

After quizzing Loris on whether German goalkeepers are the best in the world – "We have a lot of good ones but so do other countries, I would say we are up there with Spain" – I ask him why there is such a rich heritage of German goalkeepers. Names such as Sepp Maier and Oliver Kahn immediately spring to mind. "I don't know exactly how this has come about but we have good training in Germany. They put a lot of work in with you when you are young at clubs in Germany so there is an opportunity for development.

"Personally, though, I worked with an Italian goalkeeping coach [Massimo Battara] at Man City and I train with John Achterberg here who is Dutch, so it's hard to say the reason why we have had many good goalkeepers is down to German coaches."

Karius, who played as a striker as a kid but was moved into goal and excelled there when his local team's usual goalie was unavailable, ranks Kahn as one of his heroes. In 2002 the blonde Bayern Munich legend became the first, and only, goalkeeper to win the FIFA Golden Ball after being named as the best player at the World Cup in South Korean and Japan, a tournament in which Germany finished as runners-up. Could Kahn's inspired displays in that tournament be a key reason why a generation of young, highly-regarded German keepers have emerged in recent years?

"I DON'T COPY OTHER KEEPERS BUT AT CITY IT WAS GOOD TO SEE WHAT IT TOOK TO BE NUMBER ONE"

"I watched that World Cup myself and Kahn took Germany all the way to the final. He was very impressive. He got voted the best player of the tournament and won the Golden Ball and that is a really, really big thing for a goalkeeper to win. But I was nine years old that summer and I was already playing in goal so I cannot say I became a goalkeeper because of the impressive way he played in that World Cup."

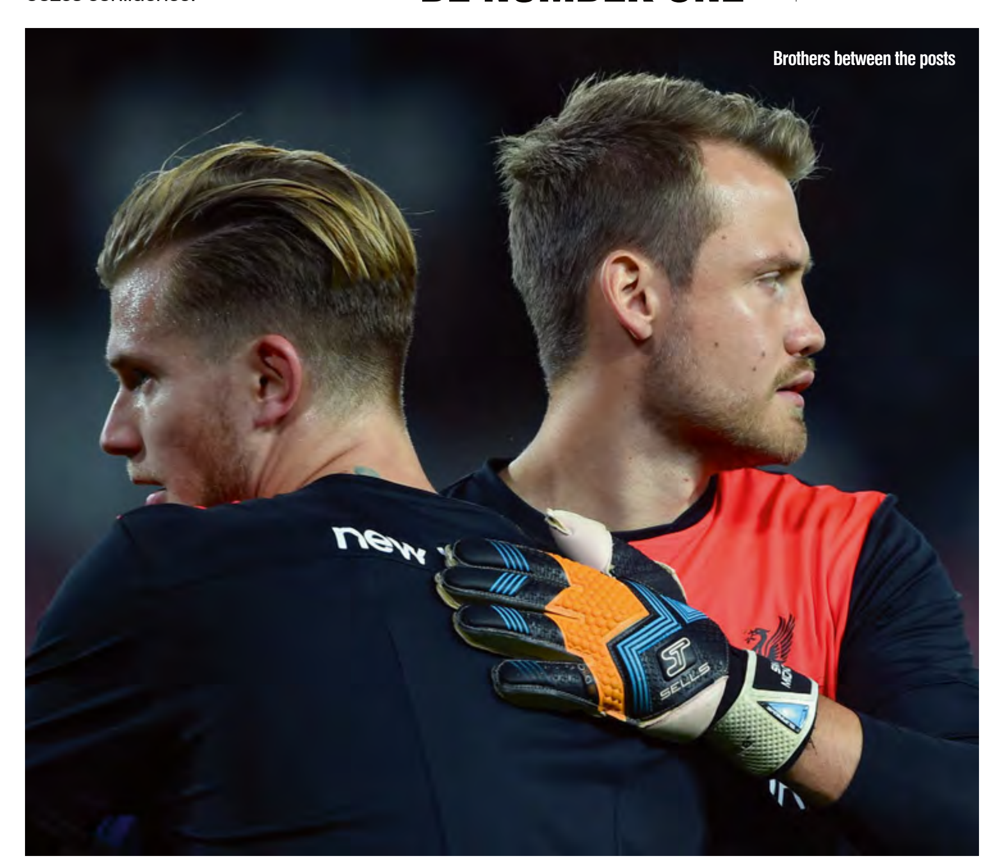
Karius arrived on Merseyside in the summer having established himself as the no1 keeper at Mainz 05. He had returned to Germany in 2011 having signed for Manchester City two years earlier when he was just 16. Moving abroad is not the usual route that teenage German goalies take, but Karius believes it was a decision that ultimately helped him become a Liverpool player.

"I wanted to experience something new even though I was young. Going to City helped me with everything, not just football-wise. I learned the language and worked with new coaches at a young age. At that time it was a really good step for me.

"At Liverpool it was a different situation. I had already been playing first-team football with Mainz for quite a bit and I am now an adult. It was a new decision to make but I wasn't scared about moving to another country again. I knew this was going to be a big challenge for me, but I don't think it is good when things are too easy. I like challenges."

Coming through the ranks to displace Joe Hart at City was a challenge too far as a teenager. But training with England's no1, currently on loan at Torino, proved to be an invaluable experience during his development. "I had a good relationship with Joe when we were training together and working every day. He is a good guy, he helped me out and at that time he was doing really well for City. I don't like to copy other goalkeepers or take things from them – I go my own way – but it was good to see what it took to be the number one there. I could see what the differences were and it always helps a young player to see what the standards are you need to aim for."

The standards Liverpool are aiming for will never change. Trophies and titles, both at home and abroad, are expected. Jürgen Klopp was denied his first piece of silverware in the League Cup final at Wembley



Brothers between the posts




L.F.C.
Standard Chartered



in February by Karius' former club and it's hardly going out on a limb to suggest City, under the management of Pep Guardiola, will be big rivals for the Reds in the coming years.

On New Year's Eve, Karius will encounter his old acquaintances for the first time when City visit Anfield for a 5.30pm kick-off that promises to have more fizz than a champagne glass at midnight. Although there are plenty of other games before that clash it already feels like it could be one of the season's key encounters for both clubs. "Hopefully it will be a big game and hopefully we will be in front of them in the table," he says with a hint of a smile as he considers where Reds and Blues could be in the Premier League table as we head into 2017.

"This year is going to be really tight at the top until the end. Arsenal, Chelsea, Man City...Tottenham are still there and we have to see how Man United are going to do in the next games. I can't really see these other teams losing a lot, so we have to keep winning and winning and winning at Liverpool if we want to stay up there. That is what we have done, but there is a really long way to go."

"I'M ALWAYS HAPPY TO MEET FANS AND TALK, IT'S GOOD TO SEE HOW PASSIONATE THEY ARE"

Before that, the 23-year-old keeper will also experience his first taste of a Merseyside derby when the Reds head across Stanley Park for a Monday-night meeting just five days before Liverpool supporter Santa Claus (well he doesn't have a blue-nosed reindeer does he) comes to town. Everton v Liverpool is a game he can't wait for.

"I was already hearing how this game is. The whole city looks forward to the game and everyone is very passionate, but these are the best games to play in. I really want to play in these games because they are really exciting and I am looking forward to experiencing it for the first time."

Good to hear, but have any Evertonians given him stick a la the Everton-supporting cashier who Daniel Sturridge revealed indulges in a bit of banter with him at his local Tesco? "Not really. I see lots of Liverpool supporters but I haven't spotted any Everton fans that are not happy with me. In England it doesn't reach the point were other fans abuse you in the street. It's a good vibe here.

"Of course I know Manchester too and it is more relaxed there. The people do not go as crazy about the players whereas here you get recognised everywhere. It doesn't matter if you have a hat and sunglasses on or whatever, the people recognise you in Liverpool. It is all in a positive way – the people are very friendly and there has been nothing that I can say has been a bad experience. I am always happy to meet the fans and talk to them. It is a good to see how passionate Liverpool fans are.

"At Mainz the city wasn't that big and because I was playing a lot everybody knew me. But here, even though I am new, it has been like that from the start. I didn't get recognised very much at all in my first few months in Mainz."

One man who recognises Karius from his Mainz days is Bruce Grobbelaar. The Anfield legend, who made 628 appearances for Liverpool, recently told the club's website that when he watched Loris playing for Mainz he "reminded me of me when I was that age" because of "the use of the ball with his feet but also how he read the game." Karius believes that the ability to read a game is a modern-day necessity for a goalkeeper, but it isn't necessarily something that can be taught.

"You can try to train for this but I'm not sure if training can result in success. Reading the game is more about instinct, about anticipating a situation before it actually happens. It is hard to train for that kind of thing, you need to have a feeling to be in the right position; to already know that a pass will go to a certain place or whatever. Sometimes you can just tell a certain situation is going to happen and you will need to get off your line to clear a ball before your opponent can get to it. Stuff like this is more instinct than something you can learn as a goalkeeper.

"My first aim is still to catch the ball and save it. But what I can do on top of that to help the team is something I'm happy with. I don't get my priorities in the wrong order. I still concentrate on saving the ball, but in addition to that I try to make it easier for the team to get out of situations that would be more difficult to deal with if I stuck to my line."

He's right, of course: there's no point having a keeper who can pass like Xabi Alonso if he's shipping goals left, right and centre, but there's no escaping the reality that distribution is now a vital part of a goalie's game. Liverpool's no1 believes that occasionally training as an outfield player is one way this facet of a goalkeeper's game can be improved.

"It is good for goalkeepers to sometimes train with the outfield players, to do a bit of passing with them and learn some of the runs so



you understand better how fast you have to react to deal with certain situations. The game has changed so goalkeepers need to adapt to it. As a goalkeeper you need to get it really right because if you play a ball out from the back and it is not 100 per cent, everybody notices; whereas when an outfield player makes a risky pass and it doesn't come off it is less of a big deal."

It can be heart-stopping for fans when keeper and defenders try to play from the back under extreme pressure from high-pressing opponents. Get it right and it opens up the pitch for the attackers to exploit the space; get it wrong and there are nerves jangling in all four Anfield stands. Loris is well aware of this, but playing safe isn't in his nature or that of his manager.

"Sometimes you take a risk when you play the ball out from the back. You have to time it to be 100 per cent perfect, whereas you could just kick it long down the middle and hope someone wins the header. When you play a chip out to the right-back or a short pass to the centre-half it can be risky, but if you get four out of five right and one wrong it is still better for the team and the way we want to play. We will do better as a team from those four out of five short passes than we would from four out of five long-balls.

"Sometimes when I take a risk it will go wrong, but in total we will do better from this style of play."

"THE FANS WANT ME TO BE A REALLY GOOD KEEPER AND I EXPECT THIS FROM MYSELF"

Although it is early days for Karius as a Liverpool player, he's already in no doubt that expectations of him are high. I ask him whether the shadows of greats like Ray Clemence, Bruce Grobbelaar and Pepe Reina put added pressure upon him and in typical, forthright style he doesn't shy away from answering. "Yes, this is a big club and at any big club there are going to be high expectations. Big clubs get players in to succeed and win trophies, so of course the Liverpool fans want me to be the best.

"They want me to be a really good goalkeeper for the club and I want that myself. The club want that too or else we wouldn't have the situation that I am in goal now. I am happy with this. I expect this from myself too and it is totally normal that the expectation is really high at a club like Liverpool. It shouldn't be any different."

Words: Chris McLoughlin

Melwood magicians

Loris Karius spends his Saturday – or Sunday – afternoons playing behind an attack-minded team that often look capable of scoring every time they attack. A great job to have on a weekend, but perhaps less so during a training session!

"It can be difficult," he says when asked what facing Sturridge, Firmino, Coutinho, Mane, Origi and Lallana on the training pitch is actually like, "but it is a good test for me. When those lads are clear on goal there are not many times when they don't put the ball exactly where they want to put it, so you're talking about really high-quality finishing. The good thing is that I train with the best so it cannot be any harder in the games. There is not much you can be surprised at when you play Man City or Arsenal or whoever if you are training with the highest-quality players every day. It can only help."

How about the best finisher on the Melwood training pitches? Can he narrow it down to just one? After a puff of his cheeks and a brief gaze into the distance to consider the options, he plumps for Liverpool's no10.

"We have a lot of great finishers here. Phil Coutinho has a great strike that you wouldn't expect. His technique is phenomenal – he strikes a ball so hard – but also Firmino has a great strike on him and Sturridge on his left foot is always good.

"Mane is really fast and very difficult to stop when he is one-on-one. He just goes past you. So to pick out one player as the best finisher is very difficult, but I was very surprised at how hard and accurately Coutinho can strike a ball with every single shot. He hits it with his in-step harder that some players can hit it with their front foot and that makes him difficult to stop."





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"THIS SQUAD IS YOUNG AND HUNGRY FOR SUCCESS"

Liverpool Ladies manager Scott Rogers reflects on a solid first season at the helm

How would you assess your first season in charge?

We are very happy with the first year and I couldn't be any more proud of the girls and the way they have gone about their task. At the start of the season, ourselves and Birmingham City were being tipped for relegation. But, as it happened, we were the only two teams to take points off the champions Manchester City and we have probably surprised a few people.

From our point-of-view we rebuilt the squad this year, so with the turnaround in players [nine arrivals and nine departures] we always knew that it was a case of trying to be competitive with the other teams in the league and just being in the games, because last year we got turned over too easily by the top teams and we were miles off. This season we've proven that we can compete with the best in the league, so now it's about keeping developing and progressing as a group and seeing where that takes us.

You've spoken in the past about the need to look at least six months ahead...

We've got to keep moving forward and trying to develop and I think that's the beauty of this squad. In the past we might have needed to add players to keep pushing the squad forward – and maybe we didn't add the type of player we needed to keep ourselves competitive at the top. With this squad we've brought the average age back down, so in actual fact whether we add players or not the squad should keep developing because they're young and they're hungry. They are very talented but have also still got a lot to learn.

Keeping this group together, learning together and pushing them on will be as good as signing two or three players. We recruited a younger group on purpose so that we could develop them over a number of years and that's what we intend to do.

Were there any games that particularly pleased you?

I think the two games against Manchester City [0-0 and 1-1] and the match at Arsenal where we won 2-1. In all three cases we had clear game-plans and the girls executed them very well and it's always pleasing to see that work. We had two very good games against City but we know they will have been frustrated and will be coming for us again next season. We lost our final game of the season to Arsenal 5-3, but even though we conceded some sloppy goals we also caused plenty of problems to a very good team, and some of their players said to me afterwards that they were really impressed with the strong bond among our girls.

The league is getting increasingly competitive...

It is and both Yeovil Town and Bristol City have been promoted into a new ten-team FA WSL 1 and I believe both will enhance the league and make it even stronger. I'm delighted for both of them. People in that league maybe expected other teams to get promoted ahead of them, and perhaps other teams expected that themselves, so it shows what great jobs the managers Jamie Sherwood [Yeovil] and Willie Kirk [Bristol] have done. It's fantastic for the league to have Bristol back and we will face a new challenge in Yeovil.





With Jürgen Klopp at Melwood…

…and Kelly Cates at the awards

The league is reverting to a winter season next year with a 'Spring Series' from February to May to bridge the gap – how will that affect your planning?

From speaking to other managers in the WSL I think the general view is that it will give us an opportunity to look at some of our younger players who you maybe wouldn't take the risk with in a competitive league game at this stage of their careers. You can almost afford to give some of those younger players exposure to the WSL in this Spring Series and I think some of them need that. We've also got to find a balance because we'll have players going to the Euros so you've got to keep them match-fit too and prepare them properly for that tournament.

Even though it isn't being seen as a competitive event as such, I do think that in reality it will be highly competitive. I think they will be competitive games and each team will use them for whatever purpose they see fit. It will keep us ticking over and then we will go again with the WSL in September so it's important that we use that mini-season to develop youngsters and keep momentum going. I think it's ideal for our group because of how young they are. It's an opportunity to use that six months to extend the players and try things which may not work. It may catch us out but it's better to try those things then than when September comes around.

The other side of it is that this year we've had a lot of gaps between fixtures and we've almost had to do four mini pre-seasons. That's been the same for all of the teams, not just us, but it is far from ideal. Part of the idea of going back to a winter season is that the FA have assured everyone that there will be more consistency in the women's league which will hopefully prevent such long breaks between the fixtures.

Has your first season in charge been everything you expected it to be?

Yes, I think so. If I'm being totally honest I think that early on I wanted to do everything and control everything because that's what I'm like with attention to detail. But then I realised quite quickly that you can't do that without almost making yourself unwell. So after that initial settling-in period where I wanted to do everything

FA WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE 1 TABLE 2016

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man City	16	13	3	0	36	4	42
Chelsea	16	12	1	3	42	17	37
Arsenal	16	10	2	4	33	14	32
Birmingham	16	7	6	3	18	13	27
Liverpool	16	7	4	5	27	23	25
Notts County	16	4	4	8	16	26	16
Sunderland	16	2	4	10	17	41	10
Reading	16	1	6	9	15	26	9
Doncaster	16	1	0	15	8	48	3

At Anfield in August for the Main Stand test-event

RESULTS 2016

MARCH		
19	Man City (H) (FAC 5R)	0-2
23	Birmingham C (H)	1-0
APRIL		
23	Sunderland (H)	2-2
27	Chelsea (H)	1-2
MAY		
2	Notts County (A)	2-3
8	Chelsea (A)	3-6
18	Sunderland (A)	4-0
25	Man City (H)	0-0
JUNE		
26	Man City (A)	1-1
JULY		
2	Everton (CC 1R)	1-0
9	Reading (H)	2-0
16	Notts County (H)	0-0
31	Arsenal (A)	2-1
AUGUST		
7	Birmingham C (A) (CC QF) (aet)	0-1
27	Doncaster RB (H)	1-0
SEPTEMBER		
1	Reading (A)	1-0
25	Birmingham C (A)	1-2
OCTOBER		
9	Doncaster RB (A)	3-1
NOVEMBER		
6	Arsenal (H)	3-5

and get to grips with all that the job entailed, I learned to delegate things and I am very fortunate to have an incredible backroom staff who all work incredibly hard. It's been everything I expected: you're happy when you win, you're disappointed and you tend not to sleep so well when you lose. But I can honestly say that I've enjoyed every minute of it.

The backing of the supporters is also important to the team's success...

We have a fantastic group of fans. When I got the job and we started letting players go, there were some people who were questioning what we were doing. But there was also a core of fans who stuck with us and trusted us and I can't thank them enough. I hope we've repaid that trust in terms of the players that we've brought in.

We've always had a plan here and the fans have been patient with that. The fact that they follow us up and down the country is fantastic to see, and the game that will probably stick out from this season was when they followed us away to Reading on a Thursday night. We were very good that night. Katie Zelem got the late winner but in all honesty we were the better team and they followed us miles and miles on a Thursday to get behind us. That just showed their dedication to us and we're extremely grateful for that because I felt they helped us get through that night. Reading were posing a tough test but our fans didn't shut up, they were constantly singing and supporting us. That game sticks in my mind as one where I actually thought: wow, what a great group of fans we've got. It was fantastic.

Interview: William Hughes

Who won what: the 2016 awards



John Aldridge with Sophie Ingle and Gemma Bonner



Gemma Bonner



Caroline Weir with Beth Tweddle

Liverpool Ladies FC celebrated a season of solid progress at their 2016 awards night held in the Beautiful Game suite at Anfield. Playing their first campaign under boss Scott Rogers they secured a fifth-place finish in FA WSL 1.

There were four awards up for grabs at the ceremony, which was held in association with club partner Vitality. The Fans' Player of the Year award in association with vixlet went to Scottish midfielder Caroline Weir, who received it from former GB gymnast Beth Tweddle. Caroline said: "It's lovely to receive this from the supporters who are absolutely brilliant with the backing they give us, home and away. I have enjoyed my first season at Liverpool from day one."

The Players' Player of the Year award saw Weir shortlisted alongside Wales captain Sophie Ingle and right-back Satara Murray. Ingle came out on top and picked up her trophy from ex-Reds striker John Aldridge. "It's always nice to receive recognition from your team-mates and I'd like to thank the girls for voting for me," she said. "I'm just happy to help the team in whatever way I can."

There was keen competition for the Standard Chartered Goal of the Season award with fine strikes from Weir, Rosie White, Natasha Harding, Shanice van de Sanden and Katie Zelem among an impressive shortlist. Weir received her second award of the night for her second goal in the 3-1 win at Doncaster Rovers Belles in October.

The final prize was the Vitality Special Recognition Award which went to the person who most embodies what Liverpool Ladies are about. The recipient was club captain Gemma Bonner who also received praise in a video message from Jürgen Klopp. She said: "I have supported Liverpool since I was a little girl and I'm living out my dream in being able to wear the Liverpool shirt and represent this club. I look at the young girls who come to watch us and think: that was me a few years back. So hopefully we can inspire them to get involved in the game."


JA
L.F.C.
BETVICTOR

SAFE HANDS

Now in his eighth season at the club, goalkeeping coach John Achterberg explains the ever-evolving role of the man between the sticks...

The main aim of a goalkeeping coach is to prepare keepers for the next game...

You have to look at the keepers as individuals, then your forthcoming opponents, and tailor their training to what you think is needed to help them for that next game. Once you have the game information on the opponent and what you believe they will do, you try and ensure the training helps the lads know what is likely to happen in the game and what they have to deal with. Next to that, you try and improve the individual attributes of the goalies: what they have to get better at.

Concentration is so important for a goalkeeper...

A lot of it is based on reactions, the distribution side of the game and the crosses coming into your box. They are the main elements and then there are positional things on top of that. You have to create concentration levels by keeping on top of the goalies and ensuring they are switched on in training, but in general the more experienced lads know that.

With the younger goalies the work on those concentration levels is more pronounced, especially around the intensity to maintain those standards and help them to be on the front foot. When the younger ones come up to train with the first team at Melwood, they see how the senior goalies work. They have to pick up the speed of the senior training and so they have to think quicker, move quicker and react quicker.

You are always looking to produce particular types of goalkeeper...

My philosophy and Liverpool's philosophy has always been the same since I came here because we like goalkeepers to be on the front foot, play high lines, be comfortable with their feet and also be good shot-stoppers. The only difficulty is that everybody likes the same kind of goalkeeper and there is not a big market in the English game in terms of physical size and the skills we are looking for. There are 20 top clubs in Europe together with the top clubs in the Premier League but no-one could name us 10 top goalies who play in the style that we like. There are a lot of good goalies but it is not easy to find the absolute top ones.

We have some very good goalies here at Liverpool and we still have Danny Ward who has progressed pretty well this season [at Huddersfield] and Ryan Fulton on loan at Chesterfield. We try and look for this kind of goalkeeper and improve them all. I always think that if they can play the way we want them to, they can always play in a defensive team, but the other way around is always a bit harder. To switch from a defensive team which plays deep towards their goal to an 'advanced team' like we are, playing in a high line and reading balls over the top, is difficult. That is



Training with Simon Mignolet at Melwood



the game we try and prepare all the young goalies for, and hopefully we will produce a few of them. When I started here, I said we would get our own keeper into the squad in future and that we have to produce keepers who can play in this league. That's the aim. With Danny, last season we had our first keeper in the first-team squad. We have also had keepers who have made the step to play in the Football League. Along with Danny Ward and Ryan Fulton, we had Laurence Vigouroux join us from Tottenham and make the next steps in two years with us plus Tyrell Belford, Jamie Stevens, and Yusuf Mersin. I don't think there are many clubs who have had so many keepers who have gone into the Football League at present. Hopefully Shamal George, Kamil Grabera and Caoimhin Kelleher will be the next keepers to follow in the coming seasons once they are ready, so it's looking good! [Academy goalkeeping coaches] Mark Morris, Neil Edwards and Ian Dunbavin work with me full-time on the keepers' progress and we are in almost daily contact about how to set the next steps for them.

If you play for Liverpool you have to be mentally strong...

It's one of the biggest clubs in the world with a massive support where every small mistake will be highlighted more than somewhere else with TV, internet, papers and social media. The keepers have to deal with it and need to have a thick skin and get on with it and play every game to the best they

Manninger, Karius, Achterberg, Mignolet

can. No keeper in the world is without mistakes but we all want ours to make none! For the goalkeeper the biggest job is to stay calm, concentrate on doing the right things and be calm in mind to focus on making consistently good decisions. Even if he receives criticism, he must focus on his job and not let talk influence him. The goalie who makes an error is obviously highlighted more than the striker who misses a chance. That is the life of the goalkeeper and you have to deal with it.

All the goalkeepers have to be at the same level, and ready...

Loris has joined Si and Alex has come in with some good experience so that Wardy can progress and get games under his belt. I'm not sure if there are many other clubs with the same kind of level. If you are the goalkeeper there is only one place available in the team so you have to try and be the best in training and make sure you are ready to produce in every game.

You need all the goalkeepers to be ready because in football, tomorrow can be very different with injuries, suspensions and so on. Anything can happen. I am happy with the situation here. We have good goalies with a good level of competition and we need every player from the no1 striker who starts at a weekend to the no2 keeper on the team-sheet. It's a team sport so we have to work hard together to get good results.

On match day I tend to look at movement and positional play...

I'll write down what has happened in what minute so I can then look back at an incident on DVD and, if need be, discuss it with the goalies if the manager asks what I think. Or if there is something that happens in the game that I think we could improve with a specific training drill, I will try and manufacture a game situation in the session to help improve that aspect so they ready for when it happens in a match.

I tend not to get too much involved with the keeper at half-time…maybe just pass on a thought if I think we can look to speed the game up or slow it down if we are leading in the latter stages, or look at a different area where there is an option to play the ball out. In general I let them play as I don't want to change their mindset or disturb their focus and I will only say something if I believe it can help the situation.

In training we try to replicate the physicality of a match...

We use padded 'wedges' just to make them feel what can happen in England because if the goalie is blocked in a Premier League game the referee doesn't always do something about it. So I try and create that kind of aggression and give them tips on how they can get away from players without getting blocked. This is not always possible because sometimes opponents will run into the goalie from behind at the last minute, and then he can't see because he's watching the other side so doesn't get too much protection. It makes them feel that they need a kind of body strength and awareness to read the movement and get away from those situations.

I like to discuss goalkeepers a lot – I can talk 24/7 on it!

Everyone has different opinions and I am pretty strong in my opinion on the way I do things and the philosophy. At a recent coaching conference in Holland we talked a bit about the confidence of the keepers in Holland as that has not been going too well in the last few years.

My opinion is that in Holland they focus too much on playing football with the goalie – creating a kind of 'passing goalie' without the 'making a save' goalie. You have to work on the full package with the right steps to improve. It is also important that you can make a save, so you need to make sure you don't forget to work on the physical side and the movement,



Stress? Just call the gaffer!

reactions and positional play. Improve jumping power, strength and so on means that you improve the keeper in being able to cover distances faster across bigger distances and with better reaction speed. There needs to be a full picture, not just a half-picture.

In coaching meetings if I am asked my opinion, I will always give my opinion...

Maybe it's not always what they want to hear but I will say what I think. I've worked well with the managers here and now Jürgen is top. We get on really well and I think things are looking very good at the moment with the way we work and the results we have achieved so far this season. Hopefully we can carry on with what we are doing.

Jürgen Klopp described me as someone who likes to work '25 hours a day'...

Pep Lijnders [first-team development coach] joined us last year and he also has that kind of energy. I always had the energy when I was playing: I would spend the whole day at the club and was always busy looking at ways of improving things, and that's how I am now as a coach, without losing the focus on the things you need for the game. I have seen a lot of goalkeeping coaches working on different attributes with tennis balls and tennis racquets and so on; whereas I try to work specifically on positional play and hitting areas and making crosses and movements that are most likely to happen in a game.

My work is very much game-related as I think you have to use the time you have as a goalie coach before the lads join in team-training by working as much as you can on improvement in the attributes we need for the next game. We combine this with what each keeper needs to improve on as an individual.

Our game is playing attacking football and trying to close up behind...

Of course counter-attacking teams will get the odd chance against us here and there but we try to control our attacking with having a good balance behind the ball. It's the same as people saying: 'We always concede more from set-plays than other teams.' We work on it every week in training and I think we improving all the time but it is not alway easy if you have three 6ft 2in guys in the team and the rest are all very energetic, mobile and highly-skilled players but not so tall. If you are playing against a team that has mainly 6ft 3in-plus players, you can only mark so many and they will always have that kind of advantage with their height difference in those situations. Of course, we practise to set-up well and hope to deal with set-plays and not concede from them.

I think the way we set-up and organise things looks very good at the moment. Joel [Matip] has been a very good signing at centre-half and has made a good impact for the team. Jürgen, Zeljko [Buvac] and Pete [Krawietz] are working hard to get their way of thinking into the team and set the team up perfectly for each game. The way of play is front-footed in the same way we want our goalkeepers to be. That is the philosophy I have always had, so I think it connects really well.

"WE NEED ALL THE KEEPERS READY BECAUSE TOMORROW CAN BE VERY DIFFERENT"

I work closely with the club's analysts...

When I came to Liverpool I made it clear that I wanted to know certain bits of information. Towards the end of my time at Tranmere, where I was player-goalkeeper coach for my last five years, I would look for information for the keepers to prepare them for the next opponent in terms of how that opponent likes to attack and so on. Here at Liverpool we have a number of good analysts so I ask them to help me with gathering footage and so on.

We have a special meeting with the goalies before each game to look at set-plays, what the opponents will want to do, where they put pressure on, what their strikers like to do, and how we might like to play out. Without giving too much away, people probably never think of half of the things we look at, but there is a lot of thinking behind it and that is how much goes into our preparation for a game nowadays. It all helps the goalkeeper to perform.

Interview William Hughes





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WE WISH YOU A KLOPPY CHRISTMAS

We asked the pupils at All Saints Catholic School in Anfield, one of Liverpool FC Foundation's partner schools, to give some of LFC's stars a festive makeover…and here's what they did



Simon Mignolet by Rhiannon aged 10

Jordan Henderson by Finley aged 8

Coutinho and Mignolet by Millie aged 6

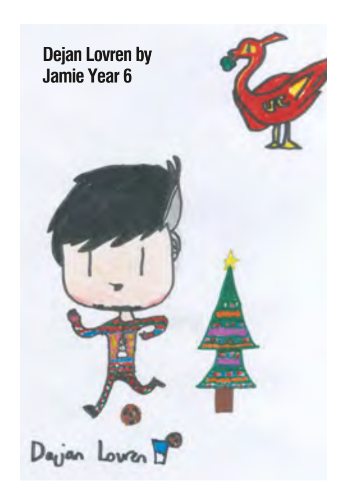


Jürgen Klopp by
Sophie aged 6



Daniel Sturridge
by Amelia aged 8


Adam Lallana by Alexandra Year 4



Dejan Lovren by Jamie Year 6



Philippe Coutinho by Lucy aged 7



Alberto Moreno by Lucy Year 6


Sheyi Ojo by Elliott Year 6


Roberto Firmino by Stephanie aged 6



Emre Can by Codie aged 10



Sadio Mane by Ben aged 10


Jürgen Klopp by Chloe aged 6

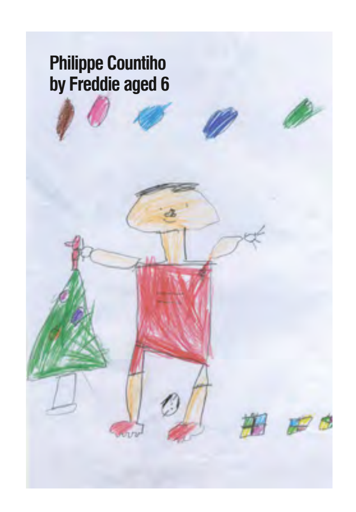

Jürgen Klopp by Joseph aged 10



James Milner by Hattie aged 6


Gini Wijnaldum by Lorcan aged 7


Philippe Coutinho by Bailey aged 6


Philippe Countiho by Freddie aged 6



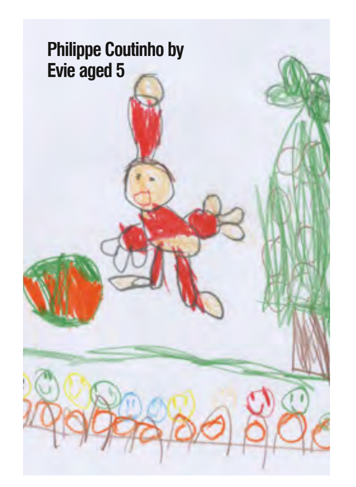
Joe Gomez by Aubrey aged 11


Kevin Stewart by Ava Year 4


Simon Mignolet by Emily Year 4



Sadio Mane by Adanna aged 7


Philippe Coutinho by Evie aged 5


Roberto Firmino by Jonjo aged 10

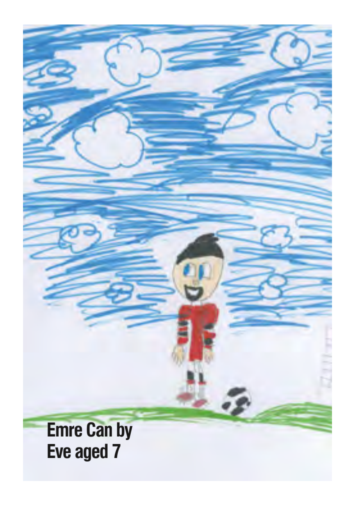

Jürgen Klopp by Nancy aged 7



Kevin Stewart by Zac aged 6


Jordan Henderson by Charlie aged 7


Joe Gomez by Ava Year 3


Emre Can by Eve aged 7



Adam Lallana by Abi aged 6


Daniel Sturridge by Jasmyn aged 10



Lucas by Holly M aged 7


Jürgen Klopp by Eabha aged 7


Emre Can by Alicia Year 4


Roberto Firmino by Daniel Year 7


Roberto Firmino by Elle aged 5



Jordan Henderson
by James aged 10



Merry Christmas
by Melody aged 11


MERRY
CHRISTMAS
to ALL YOU
YNWA
RED
noses
WALK ALONE
prem
league
2016
2017
Standard
Chartered



Neil Mellor

The challenge for Ben Woodburn is to build on that debut goal

Whatever Ben Woodburn does during the rest of his career, he will forever remember the moment he announced himself by scoring against Leeds United, at Anfield's Kop end, to become Liverpool's youngest-ever goalscorer. He will have dreamt of scoring like that since he was a young kid and while it doesn't mean he's made it, Ben will have thought to himself: I can do this. Now he has to build on it.

Only three other 17-year-olds – Michael Owen, Raheem Sterling and Jordan Rossiter – have previously scored for Liverpool, so it shows what a huge achievement it is. Kids develop at different ages between 17 and 22, but when you get yourself noticed, as Ben did against Leeds, at such a young age it is vital to remain focused if you are to fulfil your true potential.

He needs to listen to his family, his manager, the coaching staff at both Melwood and the Academy and to senior players who have been there and done it before. James Milner, who scored for Leeds when he was just 16, and Jordan Henderson are team-mates Ben can learn a lot from, but he must also avoid the hangers-on who inevitably surface following the adulation of seeing a potential future star score and want a piece of him.

There are more distractions than ever in the modern-day game and, not least because of the financial rewards, every player in the world wants to play in the Premier League. That means there is huge competition and it becomes more and more difficult for young players to establish themselves at clubs like Liverpool.

Ben is at the start of what will hopefully be an amazing journey, but he has to maintain the desire to want to improve; to be the best that he can. He won't do that if he gets carried away by one goal against Leeds or doesn't deal with the added media interest in him, but Ben must also take confidence from finding the net.

My first goals at Anfield came in a League Cup tie against Middlesbrough. As a centre-forward I was well aware that it would only be goals that got me noticed. Performing well is one thing, but when you're a striker you have to put the ball in the back of the net. When I achieved that against Boro it confirmed to me that I was right to believe I could do so at first-team level and it will be the same feeling for Ben now. He made an impact against Leeds – it wasn't an easy finish either – and the delight on his face and passionate way he celebrated the goal was infectious.

Jürgen Klopp has said he will manage Ben carefully and that means he needs to be patient. He'll be wondering when his next opportunity will arrive, but when it comes along he needs to be ready to take it. Maybe it'll be at Everton? Maybe it'll be in the League Cup semi-final? The unknown creates uncertainty, but because Ben has shown he is capable of scoring it will be in the manager's mind when he considers when next to use him.



"HOPEFULLY BEN IS AT THE START OF AN AMAZING JOURNEY BUT HE MUST WANT TO IMPROVE"



Ben and the boss

For Ben it's now a case of developing on the training pitch and there is no better example to follow than that of one of our greatest ever players, Steven Gerrard. Every single day at Melwood, Stevie would go out there and be the best that he could be. He wanted to improve and he had the same commitment, the same desire and the same passion to better himself even when he was being lauded for what he had achieved on the pitch.

If Ben Woodburn has the same hunger, desire and determination to improve then, with the staff and players he has around him, he'll have many more moments to savour as a Liverpool Football Club player.

Follow Neil on Twitter
@NeilMellor33

Didi Hamann

Painful defeats can often be the catalyst for great success

A 4-3 defeat when you've been ahead for the majority of the game is never a good thing. The only positive from it can be that you learn a lot and use the experience to develop and become more streetwise. If you do, going through that type of loss can help you to win other games.

I certainly think that was what we did when we ended up on the wrong end of a seven-goal thriller away to Leeds United in November 2000. There was no way we should have come away from Elland Road with nothing that day and we all knew it. But I think what happened there made us mentally stronger for the rest of the season and helped us to eventually win three trophies and qualify for the Champions League.

In later games that year – games where there wasn't much between the sides – we knew how to handle the situation if the other team threatened to get on top or cancel out our lead because the Leeds experience had really informed us about what not to do. Or if we went a goal behind we knew how to hang in there and do enough to halt their momentum and allow us to get a foothold in the contest. I'm thinking of the 2001 FA Cup final against Arsenal in particular.

Jürgen Klopp's side have to use the 4-3 reversal at Bournemouth in the same way this season. If they do, when May comes around they could be looking back and saying that Sunday on the South Coast taught us a lot and actually played a part in us winning trophies.

I don't think the result at the Vitality Stadium should be viewed as the huge catastrophe that some people made it out to be. Undoubtedly it was disappointing, but the bigger picture is extremely positive. Liverpool have had a really good start to the season league-wise, are in the semi-final of the League Cup and have a home draw in the FA Cup.

"THE BIGGER PICTURE IS EXTREMELY POSITIVE, WE'VE BEEN A JOY TO WATCH"



Defeat at Bournemouth: it's not a catastrophe

They've reached this point by playing some superb and highly entertaining football. The way they approach games with an obvious attacking intent is a joy to watch. Players pile forward and really threaten the opposition goal. When you have an approach like that you might get caught out occasionally. But I think the rewards far outweigh the risks.

Another reason to be optimistic about the months ahead is the strength-in-depth of the squad. Without spending a huge amount in the summer Jürgen seems to have added a real competition for places, helped by the emergence of some youngsters from the Academy. As a player you always know how strong the group is in terms of talent and the Liverpool lads will be looking around thinking it's of a high standard right now.

Alongside that, Jürgen has clearly tried to create an environment where everybody is in it together. Nobody is putting their own ambitions above that of the collective. Such a train of thought is vital if you want success because obviously not everybody can start each game. The guys who are on the bench can't be sulking or feeling sorry for themselves. Instead they have to see the bigger picture, continue working hard and ensure they are ready when required.

Divock Origi is a good example of that. Around the time we played Borussia Dortmund last season you would probably have said he was first-choice striker. This season he's had to be more patient. Then against Sunderland a chance came his way. He made an impact with the opening goal before getting a run in the side.

Having that positive approach and learning from days like Bournemouth could be the keys to a successful season. Jürgen will know that from winning titles with Borussia Dortmund and I'm sure he'll be passing those messages on to the players.

Follow Didi on Twitter @dietmarhamann

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CLUB

Finish off the shopping and get ready for an all-new official store at Anfield

Classic Liverpool FC shirts like these are now available online and from official club stores – but from 1988 to which year was Candy the main sponsor on the front? Answer on p98

SO LONG GED

The man in charge of the stadium at Anfield bids farewell

This Christmas marks the end of almost 30 years of service with Liverpool FC for retiring stadium manager Ged Poynton.

Ged, who began working for the Reds in December 1990, will leave just before his 65th birthday. Over the decades he's been involved in the redevelopment of all four sides of Anfield, most recently overseeing work on the expanded Main Stand with project director Tom Doyle – an experience he calls "one of the biggest and hardest challenges in the whole of the football industry in this country."

Ged tells James Pearce of the *Liverpool Echo*: "We got through it and it looks magnificent. The feedback has been very positive, especially from season-ticket holders who had to put up with inferior facilities previously. We've still got the changing-rooms and the media centre to complete which will be finished in early January.

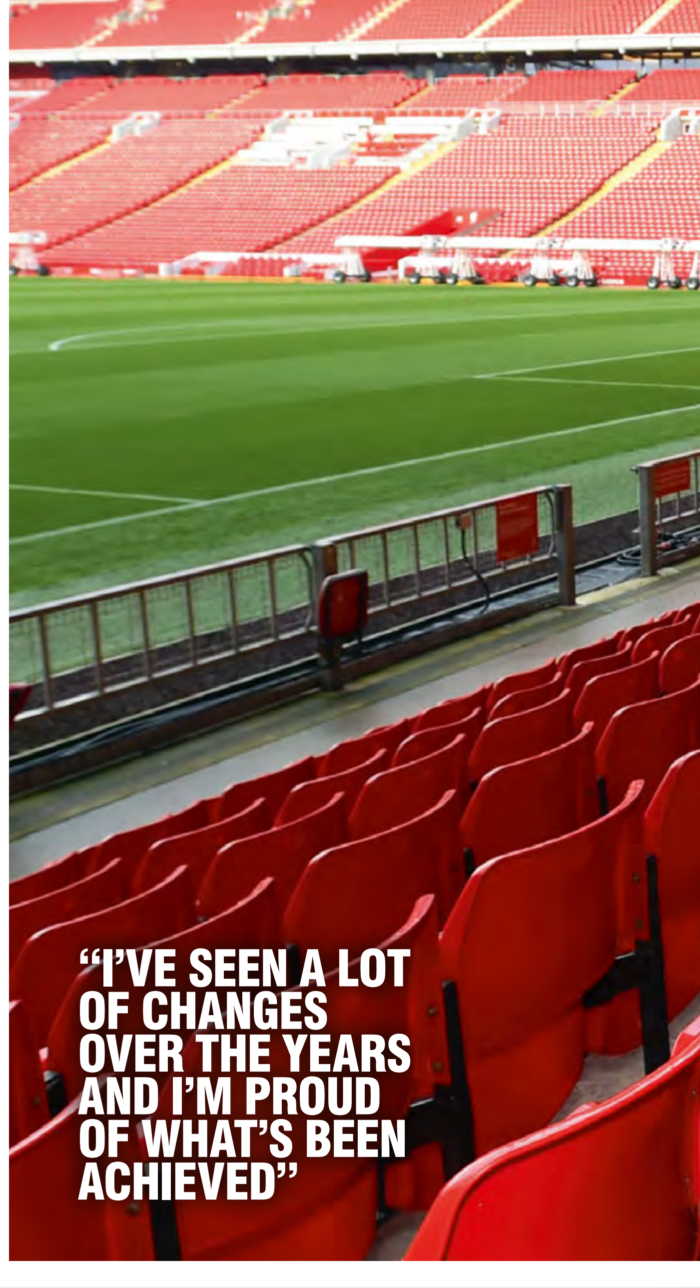
"To see what we've got now is something else. The changes to all four stands posed different challenges but I'm proud of what's been achieved. I've seen a lot of changes and I've driven many of them forward. Most of all I'm delighted for the fans who have been coming here for years – this is now the stadium they deserve."

Ged, a former rugby union player with Crosby-based Waterloo, was originally appointed as clerk of works for the Centenary Stand development. "Then in 1992 they asked me to become the club's first stadium manager. Within a few years I also took on the role of head of operations and also the most important job at any stadium, the matchday safety officer.

"At the start I didn't know football, I'd only been to two matches in my life. When I looked at the state of the old Kop, it was horrendous. Demolishing it [in 1994] was straightforward but then we ran into problems because of contaminated land. The job was stopped on day one and got going again a fortnight later after we'd spent £500,000 to sort it.

"In 1996 we did the refurb of the lower tier of the Centenary Stand, then in 1997 the upper Anfield Road extension. In 2001 with Gerard Houllier and Rick Parry I developed the new Melwood training ground. That was an exciting challenge."

There have been three parts to Poynton's job: "Firstly, running the stadium and ensuring everything was right for matchdays, from cleaning



"I'VE SEEN A LOT OF CHANGES OVER THE YEARS AND I'M PROUD OF WHAT'S BEEN ACHIEVED"



Anfield just before Ged arrived in 1990


The stadium now

to repairs. Secondly, head of ops, making sure the training grounds and the Chapel Street offices were maintained. Thirdly, as safety officer, engaging with licensing, medical, policing and stewarding."

His favourite-ever night at Anfield? "The Champions League semi-final second leg against Chelsea in 2005. That was the best atmosphere I've ever experienced. We had to close Walton Breck Road three hours before the game. You could sense that something was happening. I've never known consistent noise like it. The game buzzed from start to finish. Only Liverpool fans and this stadium could generate an atmosphere like that."

Ged, who will continue to serve on UEFA's stadium construction and management panel, feels the time is now right to step down. "When the current owners pressed the button on doing the Main Stand I was delighted. This club won't stand still – it will carry on developing. It's in great shape and I've got a lot of happy memories."

WHAT'S IN STORE

A brand new flagship development is coming to Anfield and it might just knock your LFC socks off

This month sees the start of work on Liverpool FC's new flagship store at the stadium, marking another milestone in the regeneration of Anfield and forming part of Liverpool City Council's plan to rebuild Walton Breck Road where the two-storey development will stand.

The store will offer fans a premium shopping experience with exclusive product-ranges, a specially-designed first-floor cafe – open on both matchdays and non-matchdays – and an increased number of checkout stations and shirt-printing locations to ease congestion.

With 19,500 square feet of floor space, it will also be four times the size of the current Anfield store, taking inspiration from the architecture of the stadium and incorporating design references from the original and current Kop as well as the expanded Main Stand.

Billy Hogan, the club's chief commercial officer, says: "Liverpool Football Club has an ongoing commitment to the wider regeneration of the Anfield area, and this development will take us a step closer to offering our fans the best in-store experience possible. It will be the jewel in the LFC retail crown and it is fitting that it will be situated in Anfield – the heart of this club."

The store has been designed in support of the Council's vision for a new-look high street. It aims to further enhance the stadium surrounds by generating increased activity, with a window design that will create an attractive frontage.

Cllr Ann O'Byrne, deputy mayor of Liverpool hails it as "a key anchor for a new and revitalised high street in Anfield, creating more much-needed jobs. It is hoped that it will also attract new businesses keen to take advantage of a unique location next to one of the world's most famous football clubs, while helping to support many of the existing businesses by driving more people to the area.

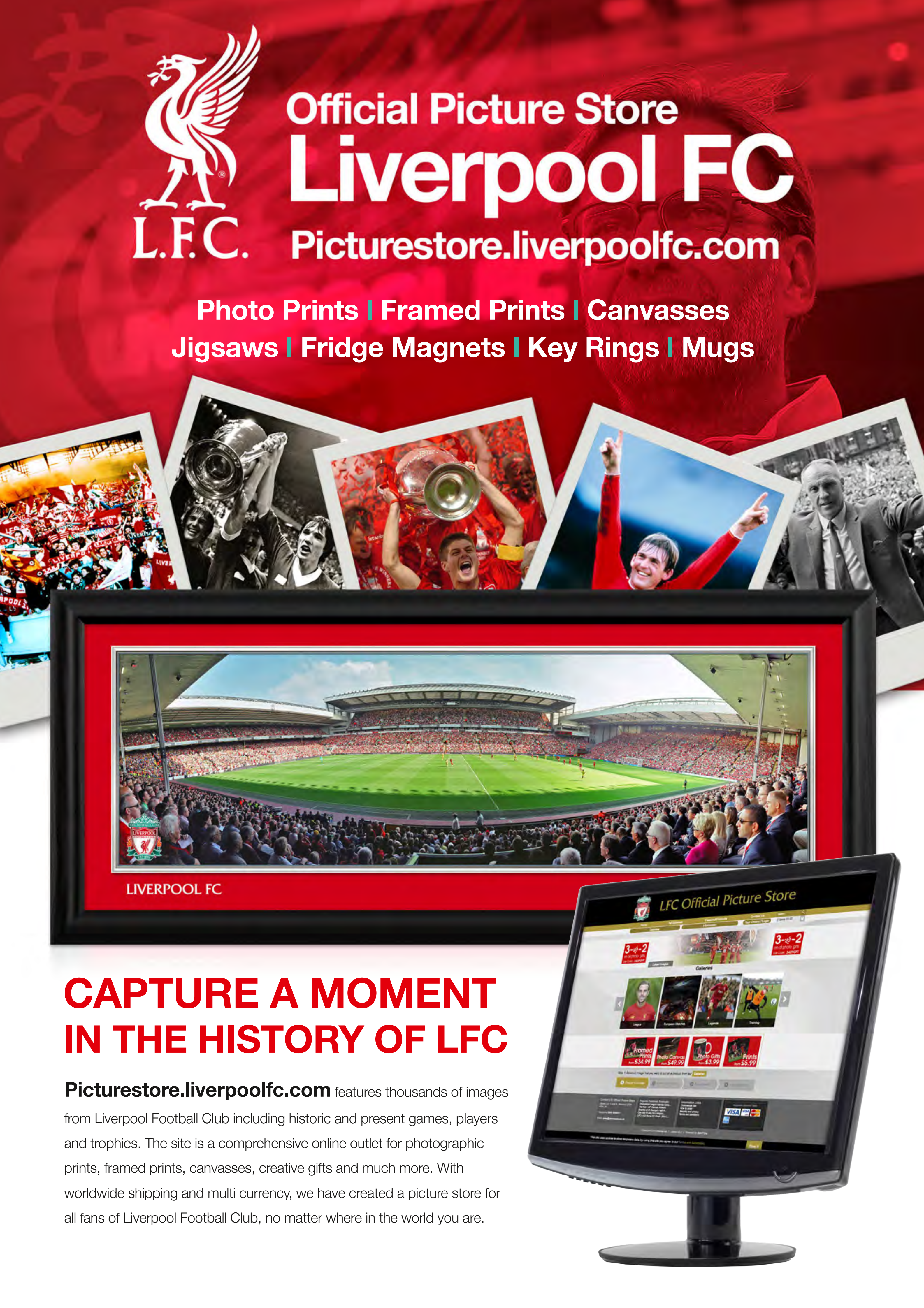
"It's an important moment in the Anfield Regeneration Project that has already delivered hundreds of new and renovated homes, environmental improvements, community facilities and hundreds of jobs and training opportunities. We are also seeking other retail, leisure and food and drink operators to stand alongside LFC's fantastic new store by investing in the new high street which will emerge over the next few years."



Three visualisations of the new Anfield store

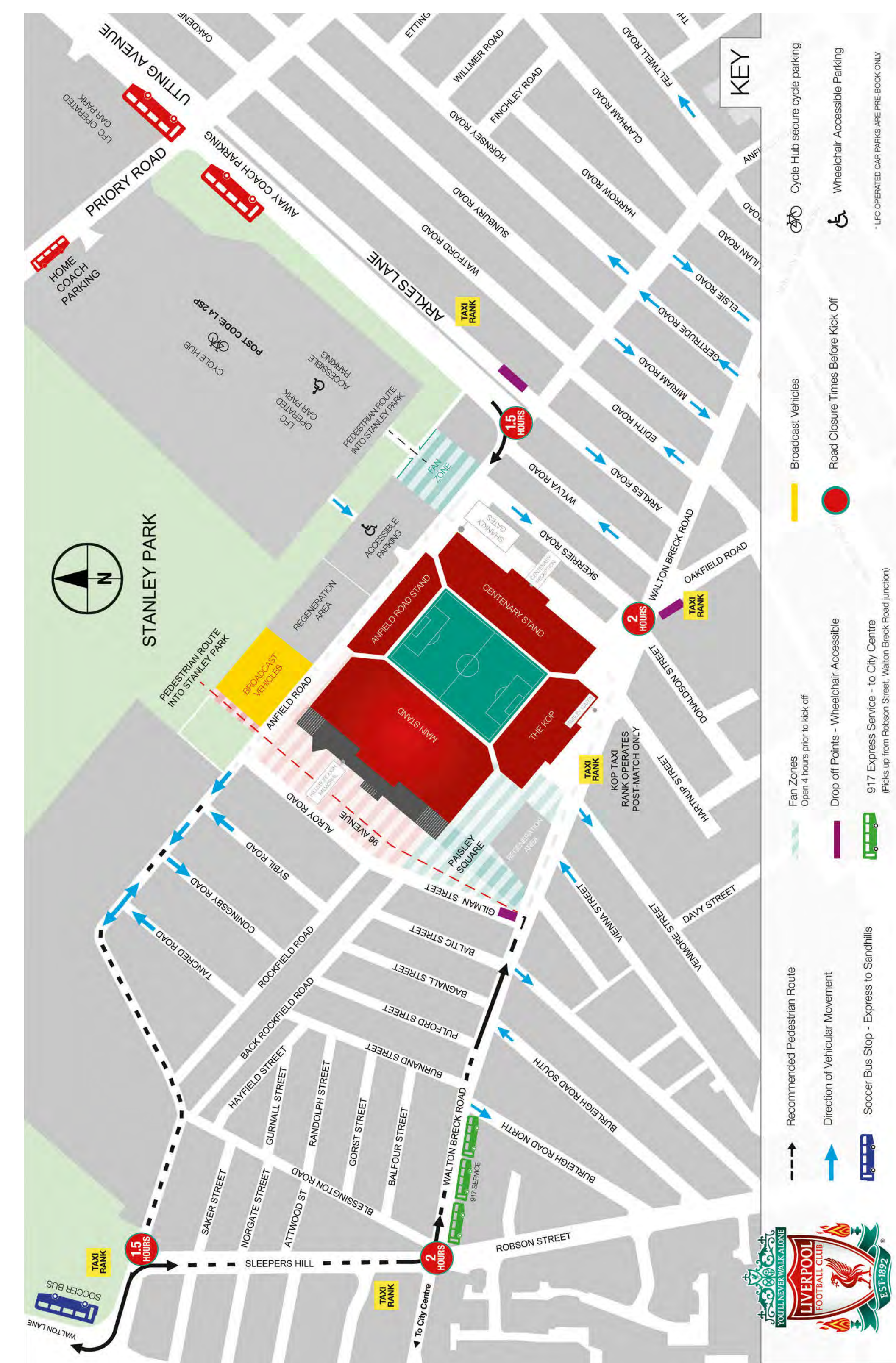





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GETTING TO ANFIELD

PLAN YOUR JOURNEY WITH CONVENIENT NEW OPTIONS



- LFC MATCHDAY TEAMS BASED AT CITY OF LIVERPOOL'S TRANSPORT HUBS TO ASSIST FANS HEADING FOR ANFIELD.
- EXPRESS 917 BUS SERVICE RUNS DIRECT FROM ST JOHN'S LANE (CITY-CENTRE) TO ANFIELD UP TO EVERY 10 MINUTES ON MATCHDAY; £12 RETURN TICKET FOR GROUPS OF FOUR.
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- NEW PEDESTRIAN ROUTES SIGNPOSTED FROM LIME STREET AND NEARBY SANDHILLS AND KIRKDALE STATIONS FOR FANS USING MERSEYRAIL AND ALIGHTING AT THESE DESTINATIONS.
- MERSEYRAIL PASSENGERS CAN ADD A RETURN SOCCERBUS TICKET (FROM SANDHILLS) TO THEIR TRAIN TRAVEL FOR £1.60 ADULTS/£0.80 CHILDREN AT ANY STAFFED STATION.
- FAN ZONES ON ANFIELD ROAD AND MAIN STAND PUBLIC REALM OPEN FOUR HOURS BEFORE KICK-OFF TO ENJOY PRE-MATCH BUILD-UP.
- FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT LIVERPOOLFC.COM/FANS/FAN-EXPERIENCE/GETTING-TO-ANFIELD.

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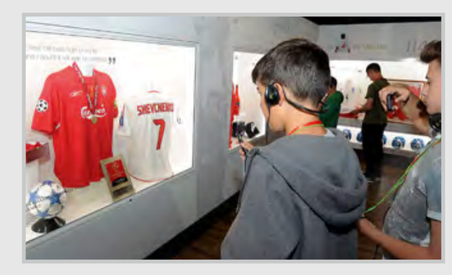
This is your chance to see some of the new areas of the expanded Main Stand.

- Sit in Klopp's pitch side seat in the new Manager's Dugout
- Enjoy some of the best views of inside the stadium from the new Executive Boxes
- Includes entry to The Liverpool FC Story museum and The Steven Gerrard Collection exhibition

Please note this tour does not include the new player's dressing rooms, new press rooms or new tunnel and is subject to change at short notice due to the continuing construction work. The full Stadium Tour opens in Spring 2017.









Don't miss out!

Book now at **liverpoolfc.com/Tour**
or call **0151 260 6677**



Joel with pupils from St Michael and All Angels

GIVING IT BACK

The latest LFC Foundations news: Reds stars out in force to support ongoing projects

Reds first-teamers have been actively engaged with Liverpool FC Foundation recently, with Joel Matip, Loris Karius, Emre Can and Daniel Sturridge all taking part in community projects.

Defender Matip visited St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School, based in Kirkby, to show his support for the Premier League Primary Stars Programme, before participating in a Q&A with the children taking part. This scheme uses the appeal of the Premier League and Liverpool Football Club to connect with young people and create healthier and more positive futures. Foundation coaches deliver the programme in 21 schools, running four weekly mini-leagues and tournaments. Joel called it "brilliant as it combines football with education, it's important that youngsters understand the importance of getting a good education as well as keeping fit and active."

Emre and Daniel answer questions from students



Back at Melwood students from Liverpool FC Foundation College were welcomed by Emre and Daniel as a reward for their great start to the new academic year, and the Reds duo passed on some fascinating insight into fitness and sport science in the modern game of football.

The students enrolled at the college in September, having left school with high aspirations as they look to follow in the footsteps of the 35 graduates currently at UK and USA universities and the seven who have progressed into professional football.

Head of education and sport, Carl Giles, said: "It's great to hear the first-team players, who are such role models to our students, stress the importance of education and encourage them to work hard to reach their goals."

Meanwhile keeper Karius called in at the LFC Academy to support the Premier League Schools Tournament, hosted by the Foundation for the past ten years. He presented the winning teams, Eastcroft Park and St Anne's, with their medals before enjoying a Q&A with the youngsters.

The Premier League Schools Tournament enables hundreds of young people to experience the thrill of being treated like a top-flight footballer and was created to increase participation in the game. Head of LFC Foundation, Andrea Cooper, calls it "a fantastic tournament which we are immensely proud to be involved in."

There was success, too, for the Foundation's Premier League Kicks team at this year's North West Regional Kicks Tournament. The seven-strong team took the trophy after taking on rival sides from Stoke City, Manchester United, Blackburn Rovers and Blackpool, before beating Bolton in the final at Wigan's Youth Zone. Project-lead Tony Cosgrove said: "Our players conduct themselves tremendously as ambassadors of our Kicks project as well as displaying some terrific football."

LIVERPOOL FC FOUNDATION IS THE OFFICIAL CHARITY OF LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB. WE DELIVER A RANGE OF INITIATIVES THAT INSPIRE PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE TO MAKE POSITIVE CHANGE HAPPEN FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES. FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @LFCFOUNDATION





CHRISTMAS CATWALK

Men and Ladies first-teamers model just some of the latest official looks from Liverpool FC…




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£30
A6990
LFC MENS ROBE
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LADIES GREY LEAGUE TEE
£15
A7272


NFIELD RD L4
LFC SANTA HAT
£6
A7645

LFC EXTRAS

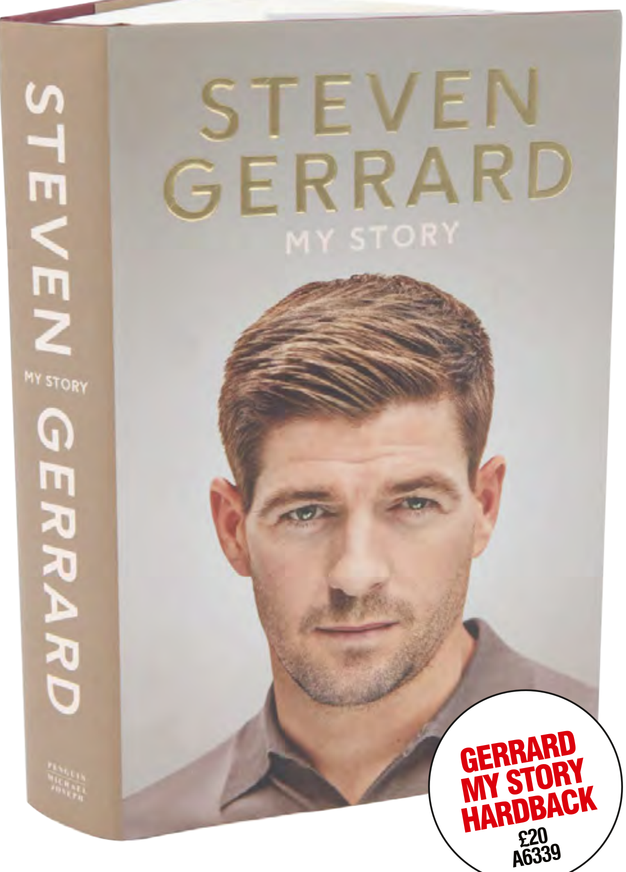
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QUIZ ANSWERS: LIVERPOOL p9: The Liver Bird on the flag on the Kop is wearing a pair of trainers! **FOOTBALL p23:** Reds manager Jürgen Klopp's spectacles were broken at Carrow Road, home of Norwich City, during the jubilant melee after Adam Lallana's goal had made it 5-4 to Liverpool in the final seconds of that crazy Premier League match last season; **CLUB p85:** Candy were shirt sponsors from 1988 to 1992, following in the footsteps of Hitachi and Crown Paints, and they preceded Carlsberg and most recently Standard Chartered.





